

Living Heritage Rights

Attitudes Towards Cultural Property in the Hellenic Diaspora

Jennifer Ivens

A Thesis

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ABSTRACT

Living Heritage Rights

Attitudes Towards Cultural Property in the Hellenic Diaspora

Jennifer Ivens

Do cultural objects have rights? This thesis looks at the flagship case of the Parthenon Marbles (also known as the “Elgin Marbles”). The case for restitution is examined from both official and popular viewpoints, in particular those of the British Museum, the Greek government and of Greek individuals living in Diaspora in cosmopolitan Montreal.

It was found that both the Parthenon Marbles themselves, and the case for their restitution, are only familiar to Montreal-Greek individuals who have acquired a background in a relevant academic discipline, such as art history, classical studies, anthropology, or even political science. However, by exposing uninformed Montreal-Greeks to the arguments for and against the case for restitution, strong interest and attitudes leading to informal social mobilization were generated. This may be interpreted as pointing to Greek immigrants’ profound need for cultural representation and visibility within multicultural Montreal.

In the final section of this thesis, the Greek Government’s notion of the Marbles being “Living Hellenic Ancestors” is examined. This thesis argues that cultural objects may hold “life potential” (as defined by Sven Ouzman in his 2006 article called “The Beauty of Letting Go: Fragmentary Museums and Archaeologies of Archives” in the book *Sensible Objects: Colonialism, Museums and Material Culture*) and, as such, should be the subjects of

'Living Heritage Rights.' This definition would in turn entitle them the to have cultural representatives appointed to determine and give effect to their needs and desires. It is argued that anthropologists have a role to play mediating international cultural property disputes by means of studying opposing parties' relationships to cultural artifacts on a grassroots level. With this information in hand, and through negotiations, it is suggested that committees of cultural representatives would be able to work out cultural accommodations and compromises, which would benefit any and all cultures concerned and also educate the public at large on human diversity and achievements.

In Memory of my Mother

Cécile Genest

Si tu veux, tu peux

With Great Thanks To:

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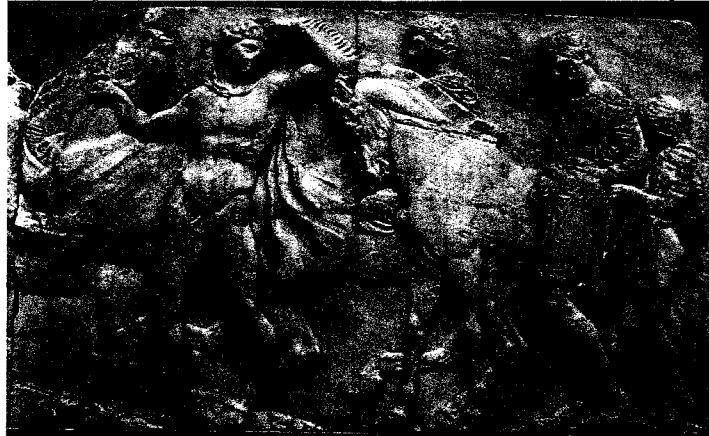
Illustrations of the Parthenon Marbles



*Parthenon Frieze
Relief Sculptures*



*Parthenon Metopes
Relief Sculptures*



*Parthenon Frieze
Relief Sculptures*



Pediment Sculptures

Introduction

The Parthenon Marbles (also known as the Elgin Marbles) are decorative sculptures and relief carvings which once adorned the Parthenon monument situated on the Acropolis in Athens. This monument is without a doubt the most recognizable symbol of Athens and an archeological wonder. In 1816, during the Turkish occupation of Greece (approximately 1400-1821) Lord Thomas Bruce removed the Parthenon Marbles from the Acropolis and eventually sold them to the British museum. In 1829 Greece declared independence and began its campaign to create a political and cultural collective identity. Throughout the last fifty years, the Parthenon Marbles cultural restitution case has been waged between the British Museum and the Greek government, both claiming legal and ethical ownership of these monuments. Initially, this thesis presents a synopsis of the various arguments presented by scholars over the last fifty years on the case for the restitution of the Parthenon Marbles. The British museum arguments, which include preservation, access and the notion of the impartial universal museum, are presented and contrasted with the Greek governments claims of integrity, identity appropriation and neo-colonialist.

Following the literature review, this exploratory thesis examines whether the restitution case is of significance to Greek immigrants living in Montreal (Quebec, Canada). This is accomplished by means of interviews with first, second and third generation Greek Immigrants. Although there was much

inconsistency amongst and between the different generations' attitude towards the case for the restitution of the Parthenon Marbles, there were some evident patterns. Some of these reoccurring social/cultural patterns include: the need for cultural representation and visibility in the context of a deeply multi-ethnic society and the mobilization of Greek immigrants through exposure to the case for the restitution of the Parthenon Marbles. In addition, a contrast is made between the exiled nature of the Parthenon Marbles and the Montreal-Greeks who voluntarily immigrated to Montreal.

As a final point of interest, this thesis focuses on the Greek government claim that the Marbles are "Living Hellenic Ancestors". This section contends that if we are to accept the claim that these objects may hold "life potential"¹ they must be granted 'Living Object Rights' as opposed to simple cultural property rights. Within these rights 'living heritage objects' should be appointed cultural representatives, who would assist in determining the needs and desires of living heritage. This thesis suggests that the Parthenon Marbles may have developed a dual identity (British/Greek) and would benefit from a fair compromise, which may be as simple as shared/alternating hosting of these 'living marbles' between the New Acropolis Museum and the British Museum.

¹ Ouzman & Edwards: 2006, pp.277

Chapter One: Historical Background

1.1 The Parthenon

The Parthenon is a colossal and intricately beautiful monument situated on the Acropolis in Athens. Of all the various monuments and sculptures, which populate Greece, the Parthenon is the greatest and most widely recognized symbol of the Greek nation. It serves as a physical representation of the greatness and importance of Greek history. It is a bridge between the ancient and Modern Greek nation. What is more, the Parthenon is the symbol *par excellence* of the achievements of Greek ancestors and of their contributions to the development of civilization².

This structure was the second built in its location; the Persians destroyed the first monument in 480 BC when it was still under construction. In 450 BCE, after the end of the Persian war, Pericles (a leading statesman, orator, and general of Athens) won a vote amongst the Athenian assembly which declared that national funds which used to be devoted to combating the Persians be reassigned to the rebuilding of monuments which were destroyed during the Persian war³. In 448 BCE it was decided by the Athenian assembly that the national revenue surplus should be used to rebuild the Parthenon⁴. Two men, Pericles and Phidias, were appointed to manage the building of the Parthenon⁵. They employed hundreds of sculptors, painters and architects. It was the variety of artists involved with gave the Parthenon's relief sculptures their uniqueness

² Browning: 2008, pp.13

³ Hitchens: 2008, pp.20

⁴ Hitchens: 2008, pp.2

⁵ Yalouris: 1960, pp.VIII

and stylistic variety⁶. Amongst the architects selected for this monumental task were Iktinos and Kallikartes⁷. They helped designed the Parthenon to house an oversized cella⁸ in order to contain a gigantic statue of Athena⁹. In fact, the temple was itself dedicated to the patron Goddess of Athens “Athena Parthenos” or Athena the Virgin¹⁰. Athena has since the birth of Greece been worshiped by Athenians as their patron Goddess and defender¹¹. Browning believes that the Parthenon was also dedicated to the fallen Greek soldiers who served in the Persian war in 480 BCE¹². The Parthenon was built from 447 BCE to 432 BCE in a Classical Doric style of architecture¹³. One of the distinguishing factors of the Doric temple architecture is the Metopes¹⁴: the Parthenon contained ninety-two which were carved to depict scenes of the civilized Greeks overcoming their barbaric enemies¹⁵. These Metopes were mounted onto Blocks then attached intermittently with Triglyph¹⁶ to the Frieze that ran the length of the building above the Architrave and beneath the Cornice (See Picture Doric Order). The Pediment sculptures were the last decorations to be completed (432 BCE), the west entrance depicted the battle between Athena and Poseidon over the ownership

⁶ Yalouris: 1960, pp.VIII

⁷ Pedley: 2002, pp.248

⁸ Cella: inner chamber of a temple.

⁹ Pedley: 2002, pp.248

¹⁰ Pedley: 2002, pp.248

¹¹ Yalouris: 1960, pp.VIII

¹² Browning: 2008, pp.2

¹³ Pedley: 2002, pp.248 & Browning: 2008, pp.3

¹⁴ Metopes: Rectangular decorative Doric architectural elements, located between the triglyphs on the frieze. In the case of the Parthenon, the metopes are marbles blocks decorated with relief sculptures that were originally painted.

¹⁵ Pedley: 2002, pp.250

¹⁶ Triglyph: vertical tablets situated between Metopes on a Doric frieze.

of Athens and the east entry portrayed the birth of Athena¹⁷. These groups of sculptures were condensed and made to fit the limited triangular area above the entryways. According to Browning (who quotes Richard Ernest Wycherley, author of *How the Greeks Built Cities*) the Parthenon is an important representation of the pinnacle of ancient Greek society's architectural and sculptural achievements¹⁸. It was commissioned and supervised by an Athenian citizens' assembly and built by hundred of Greek workers¹⁹. Browning emphasizes the fact that it was the Greek people who commissioned and constructed the Parthenon with the intent of unifying and maintaining Greek national and cultural pride in ancient times and in the future²⁰. Hamilakis, on the other hand, argues that the Parthenon and all of its sculptures and decorations were a form of "conspicuous consumption" which emphasizes the political hegemony and military prowess of the state²¹. This attestation to Athenian greatness was, according to him, an intimidation strategy intended to suppress the Persians whom they had recently vanquished²². Some scholars suggest that communities need representations of historical triumphs in order to solidify their identity and a popular method for achieving this is the preservation and construction of monuments²³. Yalouris proposes that in order to vanquish the great Persian army, every Athenian citizen had fought, therefore this victory was an

¹⁷ Pedley: 2002, pp.251

¹⁸ Browning: 2008, pp.6

¹⁹ Browning: 2008, pp.3

²⁰ Browning: 2008, pp.2

²¹ Hamilakis: 2007, pp.248

²² ibid

²³ Whelan & Moore, 2006, pp.85-86

empowering and socially unifying triumph which was wholeheartedly commemorated through the building of the Parthenon which represents “the powers of right, honesty and virtue, the justice of the gods and faith in man”²⁴.

In 600 A.D., following the Christianization of Rome, the Parthenon was converted into a Christian Church and then once the Ottoman Empire had conquered Greece (1448) the Parthenon was yet again transformed into a military stronghold and mosque in 1460²⁵. It was during the period of the Turkish occupation and the Great Turkish War (1684–1699) that the Parthenon suffered great destruction. In 1687 the Venetian forces bombed the Acropolis that contained large quantities of gunpowder; the Parthenon exploded devastating the east section of the edifice²⁶. Following this attack, Athens fell to the Venetian forces²⁷. Some of the Venetian soldiers are also suspected of having further defaced the monument in order to bring home sculptural mementoes²⁸. It has been claimed that prior to this accident earthquakes had damaged the temple and zealous Christians had defaced several sculptures. Owing to the historical catastrophes incurred by the Parthenon, many art lovers of the time, such as Lord Elgin, thought it advisable to disassemble some of the remaining partially intact sculptures and take them away to prevent further damage or acquisition by competing colonialist countries.

²⁴ Yalouris: 1960, pp.VIII

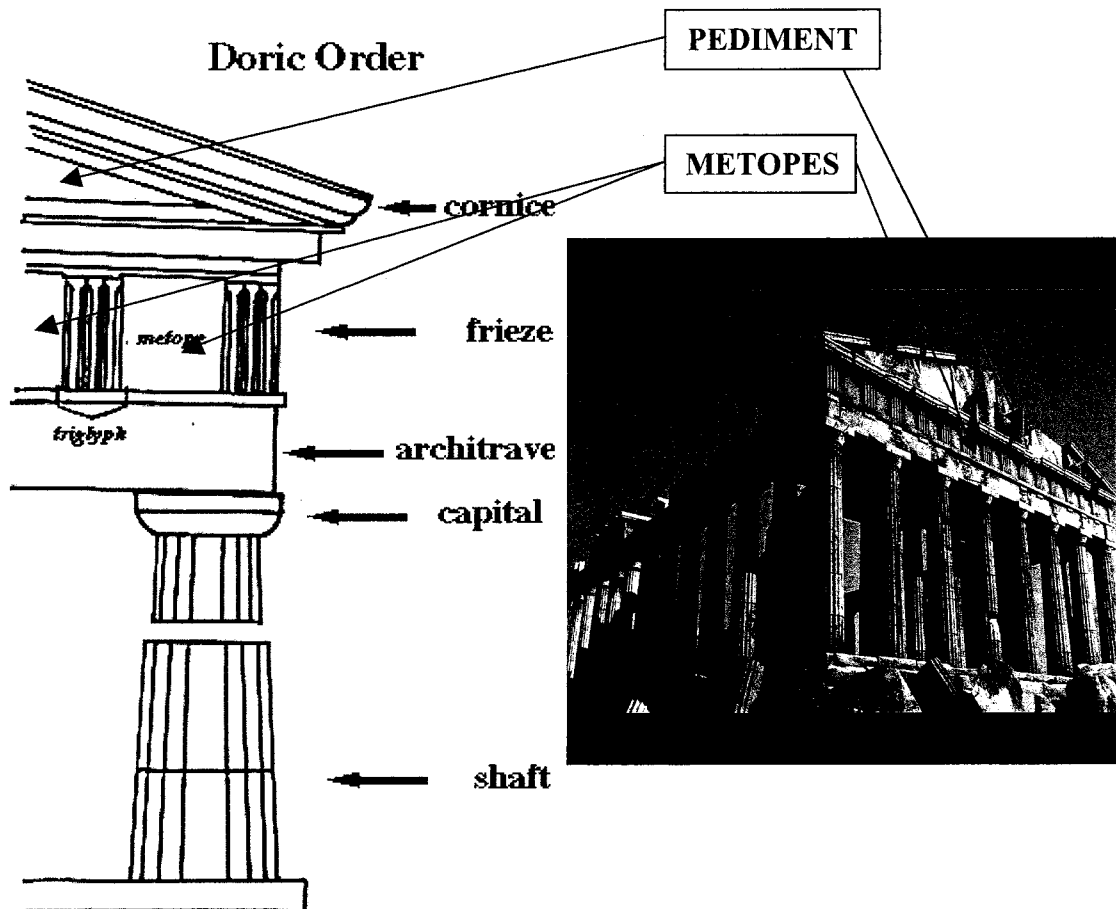
²⁵ Atwood: 2004, pp.133 & St. Clair: 1998, pp.337

²⁶ Neils: 2001, pp.4

²⁷ Browning: 2008, pp.10

²⁸ King: 2006, pp.241

The Athenian Acropolis Parthenon



1.2 Lord Elgin

In 1799 Thomas Bruce, seventh Lord of Elgin, was appointed the British Ambassador to the Sublime Porte of the Ottoman Empire who was at that time occupying Greece.²⁹ During his tenure, Lord Elgin removed sculptures and relief carvings from the Parthenon and sent them to England where they were eventually sold to the British Museum in 1816³⁰. Elgin exported 247 feet (of the 524 feet Frieze fifteen Metopes),



seventeen pediment sculptures and various fragments³¹. There are two conflicting images of Lord Elgin amongst scholars. On one hand, he is the altruistic savior of world heritage and classical art yet on the other, he is seen as an exploiting, bribing, conniving thief of Greek cultural heritage. The latter image was inspired by the poetry of Byron who advocated cultural nationalism and fought for Greek Independence. The term Byronism implies the Romanticism of leaving art *in situ*. King takes great care in her book to discredit Byron claiming that all those who supported his version of Lord Elgin were simply jealous of Lord Elgin's archeological accomplishment³². Atwood agrees that most of the

²⁹ Merryman: 2000, pp.24

³⁰ *ibid*

³¹ Merryman: 2000, pp.26 & Atwood: 2004, pp.134

³² King: 2006, pp.283 & 284

vindictiveness against Elgin was due to resentment³³. The question of the legality of Lord Elgin's exportation of the Marbles must take into account the mentality of the colonialism times and the firman issued to Elgin by the Ottomans.

1.3 Colonialism and Classicism

In the early 1800s colonialist competition for the acquisition of Classical Art was at its summit. Hugh Trevor-Roper explains how monuments which were/are associated with city prestige and national myths were often destroyed or deported by wartime victors as a method to humble, destroy and/or appropriate the history of the conquered nations³⁴. Carman adds that cultural property appropriations propagated the colonialist sense of empirical pride³⁵. Other scholars suggest that by bringing the Elgin Marbles to Britain, the English identity became coupled to the succession of the "culture of democracy" that prospered in ancient Greece³⁶.

What's more, the Napoleonic French mentality wished to attain and expose all forms of cultural trophies in the Louvre³⁷. Some researchers claim that the English, who were the bitter enemies of the French, saw the preemptive removal of art from the Parthenon as a method of ensuring that they did not fall into wrongful hands³⁸. Other intellectuals allege that Lord Elgin only intended to make casts of the Parthenon until he realized the precarious situation the building

³³ Atwood: 2004, pp.136

³⁴ Merryman: 1987, pp.3

³⁵ Carman: 2005, pp.74

³⁶ Barkan & Bush: 2002, pp.3

³⁷ Merryman: 1987, pp.15

³⁸ Barkan & Bush: 2002, pp.71-81

would be left in were the French to lay claim to it³⁹. Whereas some believe he always intended to remove the originals in order to bring them back to his homeland with the purpose of exposing Britain to the Classical Arts⁴⁰. Elgin also had insider competition since other English nobles such as Charles Townley were also in pursuit of the precious sculpture of the Parthenon⁴¹. There is a great deal of debate as to the original intentions of Lord Elgin in transporting the Marbles to Britain. Most literature favors the interpretation that he had intended to decorate his mansion with the casts and originals; however, King argues that he had always intended to sell the marbles to the British Museum⁴². Moreover, she contests the widely assumed belief that he only sold his collection because he incurred a deficit during the excavation. King claims that if that were the case he would have sold the 'Elgins' to Napoleon who would have paid him vastly more than the British Government⁴³. Ergo, it was his desire to bring to England the richness of Greek Classical Art that made him sell the Marble to the British Government. Atwood would suggest that the sale was due to Elgin's diminishing wealth, and explains that since he was financially unable to be an art collector he resorted to being an arts patron⁴⁴. Moreover Atwood clarifies that the sale was not easily facilitated. Elgin asked for 74,240 pounds for his collection but the British Government (financially taxed due to the costly war) only gave him 35,000. The 'Elgins' are said to have influenced European art in monumental

³⁹ Hamilakis: 2007, pp.251 & King: 2006 pp.236

⁴⁰ Atwood: 2004, pp.132 & King: 2006, pp.285

⁴¹ Barkan: 2002, pp.70-74

⁴² King: 2006, pp.281-282

⁴³ King: 2006, pp.282

⁴⁴ Atwood: 2004, pp.138

ways⁴⁵. European architecture was the greatest affected by the Elgins, which created a genre of neoclassical design⁴⁶. Moreover, the plaster casts brought back by Elgin have aided in the present day studies of the Parthenon⁴⁷.

1.4 Firman

The greatest debate surrounding the legalities of Lord Elgin's Marble acquisitions involves the legal decree (firman), which permitted him access to the Acropolis. Since the Parthenon was being used as a military fortress, it was restricted to civilians. In order to gain access, Elgin had to bribe soldiers to permit his artists to enter the Acropolis to sketch the monuments⁴⁸. After having been refused access to the Acropolis on several occasions Lord Elgin sought a firman that would grant him unrestricted admittance to the monuments. It was only after the British took Egypt from the French and restituted it to the Ottomans that the British Lord was granted his firman as a form of reciprocity⁴⁹. The wording of the firman is the greatest cause of dispute. The contract states that the Lord and his team are allowed to excavate and remove. St. Clair explains that this is not equal to stating that he was permitted to remove and excavate⁵⁰. He believes the firman authorizes Elgin to "remove some stones with inscriptions and figures" and to "copy, draw, mould and dig around the Parthenon" which does not equate, in

⁴⁵ King: 2006 & Neils 2001

⁴⁶ Atwood: 2004, pp.138

⁴⁷ Neils: 2001, pp.4

⁴⁸ Merryman: 1987: pp.10

⁴⁹ Merryman: 1987, King: 2006 & St. Clair: 1998

⁵⁰ Merryman: 1987, pp.7

his opinion, to dismantling and removing entire sculptures from the monument⁵¹. St. Clair goes on to explain that in personal correspondences Lord Elgin himself did not interpret this wording to mean that he was permitted to remove anything from the monuments⁵². King on the other hand argues that no restrictions were incorporated into the firman and that Lord Elgin's team had carte blanche on what they could excavate⁵³. Additionally, King argues that many of the Metopes collected by Elgin were not in fact mounted to the Parthenon; they had fallen from the Frieze onto the ground below the architrave due to earthquakes and the bombardment⁵⁴. In Browning's articles on the Parthenon Marbles, he quotes a former "Keeper of Greek and Roman Antiquities in the British Museum" who states that regardless of the ambiguity of the Firman it was "doubtful if this firman authorizes Elgin to demolish any part of the structure of the Parthenon to obtain sculptures"⁵⁵.

St. Clair proposes that it was the Voivode (governor of Athens) who had been convinced by Elgin's associate Philip Hunt to interpret the firman in their favor⁵⁶. King explains that the wording of the firman is inconsequential due to the fact that the representative of the Ottoman Empire gave Elgin's team permission to disassemble the Frieze⁵⁷. In St. Clair's opinion, the Voivode did not have the authority to overstep the firman thus the legality of the actions are still

⁵¹ The Committee for the Reunification (formerly Restitution) of the Parthenon Marbles: 2002, History of the Marbles, The Story of the Elusive Firman.

⁵² *ibid*

⁵³ King: 2006, pp.247

⁵⁴ King: 2006, pp.252

⁵⁵ Browning: 2008, pp.11

⁵⁶ St. Clair: 1998, pp.93

⁵⁷ King: 2006, pp.271

disputable⁵⁸. It is stated by Merryman and King that more than one firman was issued granting Lord Elgin the right to ship the Parthenon artifacts. One of the shipments was being held at Piraeus Port by the Voivode due to French pressures and was released following the receipt of an official firman from the Ottomans⁵⁹. According to these authors, by granting Elgin the right to transport the original Marbles along with the casts by boat, the government warranted Elgin's actions. Some authors such as Jeanette Greenfield go so far as to challenge the existence of the original firman that gave Elgin permission to remove the Metopes and Pediments from the Parthenon. Greenfield suggests that there may never have been a firman owing to the fact that the only copy left of this illusive contract is an Italian translation; there is no direct documentary proof⁶⁰.

⁵⁸ St. Clair: 1998, pp.93

⁵⁹ Merryman: 2000, pp.39

⁶⁰ Greenfield: 1998

Chapter Two: History of Hellenic Diaspora

2.1 History of Greek Diaspora

As far back as 8th century BCE, Ancient Greeks undertook expeditions in order to establish new cities in coastline areas surrounding the Mediterranean and the Black Sea⁶¹. These communities were established with the purpose of trading with the ‘homeland’ and in so doing the Greek market expanded and diversified⁶². In fact, this system resembled the European form of colonialism given that these new cities grew and became so prolific that they themselves established new ‘colonies’⁶³. Although these new communities were independent of the motherland, they retained the notions of Hellas through common language and culture. The heart of the Hellenic history lies in the mainland of Hellas or these cities of Hellas. This aggressive form of emigration also served to Hellenize the surrounding cultures, again not unlike colonialism⁶⁴.

Following the Roman conquest, Greeks fled in order to establish themselves in areas with socio-political stability⁶⁵. This migration was repeated following the fall of Constantinople in 1453 when Greeks emigrated away from the Turkish besieged Hellas to areas such as northern Europe, the Black Sea coastal territories and Russia⁶⁶. These new forms of displacement are explained by Panagakos as the simple continuation of a “long and illustrious ancient

⁶¹ Tamis & Gavaki: 2002, pp. 17

⁶² ibid

⁶³ Tamis & Gavaki: 2002, pp. 17-18

⁶⁴ Tamis & Gavaki: 2002, pp. 18

⁶⁵ ibid

⁶⁶ Tamis & Gavaki: 2002, pp. 19

history” and therefore providing stability to the collective memory of Greeks throughout the world⁶⁷. Due to political, economic and social instabilities from the 1500s up until the liberation of Greece in 1830, virtually the entire male population of certain villages emigrated abroad⁶⁸. In certain cases, during the peak of the emigration movements in the 17th and 18th centuries, the entire population of island villages and regions were transplanted from Greece to areas such as Moldavia, Vlachia, Transylvania, Austria, Hungary and central Europe⁶⁹.

Today it is very difficult to get good statistical data on the number of Greek immigrants living abroad since in most Western countries censuses have only recently been politically mandated⁷⁰. However, it has been established that the agrarian and industrial revolutions brought forth a tremendous amount of Greek immigration to areas such as Australia, New Zealand, Canada and the U.S.A⁷¹. Some estimates indicate that 1.5 million Greeks left their country as economic emigrants and refugees in the 20th century; of these, one million established themselves as unskilled laborers in North and South America⁷². The peak of emigration to North America occurred during the 1960s, at this point, the resettlement was usually thought to be temporary by the Greek emigrants. However, by the 1970s it was apparent that political and economic struggles in Greece would endure, which lead Greek refugees and immigrants to settle abroad permanently. They organized new communities and political/social Greek

⁶⁷ Panagakos: 2007, pp. 476

⁶⁸ Tamis & Gavaki: 2002, pp. 19

⁶⁹ *ibid*

⁷⁰ Tamis & Gavaki: 2002, pp. 20

⁷¹ Tamis & Gavaki: 2002, pp. 21

⁷² *ibid*

institutions, which were officially recognized by the multiculturalism-oriented Canadian Government⁷³. Hadwick argues that these Greek communities were developed using cultural leaders' reconstructed static notions of Greece (a particular place, time and language) to construct a collective memory while still aspiring to one day return to the homeland⁷⁴. Tamis and Gavaki explain how Greek communities are often founded on the basis of nostalgic sentiment of the homeland⁷⁵.

2.2 Montreal Greek Community History

The Montreal Greek Communities are some of the most “institutionally developed ethnic groups” within Canada, most prominently, the Hellenic Community of Montreal⁷⁶. Due to the dense concentration of Greek immigrants within the greater Montreal area and owing to French / English political divisions, the Hellenic society turned inwards creating a dynamic society⁷⁷. At present, the Montreal Hellenic Community owns four churches, a day school with four campuses, a senior citizens residences and a soccer team⁷⁸. The community has over 2000 members, 300 employees and 700 volunteers⁷⁹. Leaders of the community claim that the Canadian government’s multiculturalism policies have permitted the Montreal Hellenic Society to found organizations and schools focused on providing their community with resources to maintain their

⁷³ Panagakos: 2007, pp. 472

⁷⁴ Hadwick: 2006, pp. 211

⁷⁵ Tamis & Gavaki: 2002, pp. 185

⁷⁶ Tamis & Gavaki: 2002, pp. 316

⁷⁷ Tamis & Gavaki: 2002, pp. 184

⁷⁸ Tamis & Gavaki: 2002, pp. 189

⁷⁹ *ibid*

preconceived notions of Hellenic identity⁸⁰. Through these communities and educational institutions, Greek leaders aspire to maintain the concept of a “Global Greek Diaspora” based on the historiography of modern Greece and its connections to antiquity through such methods as language preservation⁸¹.

Key to the maintenance of the Hellenic culture is the continuation of the Greek language, which has been facilitated by the establishment of a Greek day school. According to Gavaki, these schools have as their goals to “[build] a sense of self and *peoplehood*, and [provide] the younger generations with their links to Hellenism and the Motherland, giving them roots and history”⁸². The Greek Orthodox religion is also an important aspect of Hellenism in Montreal; the construction of Orthodox Churches went hand in hand with the establishment of the Montreal Hellenic Community⁸³. Some Greek cultural activities are performed in churches during religious holidays; others are performed within the family, the Greek schools, the Greek communities and associations with the goal of “[reinforcing] the preservation of Greek customs, traditions and celebrations”⁸⁴. These traditional celebrations are meticulously celebrated in order to maintain a connection to the Homeland and Greek culture. This however, is problematic in its own way for Greece since its practices, celebrations, language and culture have evolved over time whereas immigrants notions of the symbols of homeland culture and tradition have not.

⁸⁰ *ibid*

⁸¹ Panagakos: 2007, pp.476

⁸² Tamis & Gavaki: 2002, pp. 312

⁸³ Tamis & Gavaki: 2002, pp. 185

⁸⁴ Tamis & Gavaki: 2002, pp. 257

2.3 Homeland

Mirzoeff explains the concept of Greek Diaspora as: "...determined by the past, by the land which has been lost"⁸⁵. It is this concept of a homeland, a symbolic point of origin, and imagined homogeneous community, which unifies Hellenic communities the world over⁸⁶. This memory of the homeland has become more of a symbol than an actual valid representation of the Greek nation. Many practices sustained within the Diasporas are no longer practiced in the homeland. The concept of the homeland and versions of Greek history as expressed through a veil of nostalgia and selective memories is not only intended as a means of maintaining Greek identity among succeeding generations living in Diaspora, it is also a way of self-portraying oneself to 'others' in an environment of cultural assimilation. Ganguly explains:

...recollections of the past serve as an active ideological terrain on which people represent themselves to themselves. But the past's resonance acquires a more marked salience with subjects for whom categories of the present have been made unusually unstable or unpredictable... Consequently, the stories people tell about their pasts have more to do with shoring up an interiorized self-understanding than with historical truths⁸⁷.

Even though Hellenic communities seek to maintain their connection to Greece by maintaining static cultural practices, scholars such as Tawadros claim that the concept of a seamless national identity is impossible considering the "inverted traditions, re-constructed histories and creation of new symbols and

⁸⁵ Mirzoeff: 2000, pp.4

⁸⁶ Yuval-Davis: [1997] 2000, pp.66

⁸⁷ Ganguly: 2001, pp. 91-93

devices” ascribed to by Greek migrants throughout history⁸⁸. Moreover, with the advancement of technologies, instant and ongoing connections to Greece may aid immigrants to enjoy aspects of their culture while residing in Canada, which in turn may help the collective memory to become more fluid and less founded on nostalgia and the desire to return⁸⁹.

2.4 Homeland Politics

Although physically separated from their homeland, Montreal Greek immigrants maintain their connection to Greek politics through both local and from Greek mass media. Greek immigrants and succeeding generations are actively involved in the political and social developments underway in Greece⁹⁰. Some scholars hypothesize that Greek immigrant involvement in Canadian politics is limited due in part to their imperfect knowledge of French and English⁹¹. Moreover, “one can argue that political beliefs and practices are inseparable from the previous cultural experiences of the new immigrants. They have learned and practiced politics in their home society in different ways, and it is thus natural for them to be more interested in the politics with which they are familiar and to which they are sentimentally connected”⁹².¹ Greek individuals born in Montreal, on the other hand, have found ways to combine homeland political interests with host-land politics. My fieldwork findings suggest that there are high levels of

⁸⁸ Tawadros: 1994, pp. 106

⁸⁹ Panagakos: 2007, pp. 479

⁹⁰ Laguerre: 2006, pp. 163-164 & Yuval-Davis: [1997] 2000, pp.66

⁹¹ Chimbos: 1980, pp. 119

⁹² *ibid*

involvement and interest in Canadian politics by second and third generation Montreal-Greek immigrants.

In Greece, King Alexander died unexpectedly on 25 October 1920. This royal demise brought forth the question of whether Greece should be a monarchy or a republic, which focused the following elections into a contest between the Greek revolutionary Eleftherios Venizelos and Alexander's father king Constantine. Although king Constantine was elected, great social instability and dissatisfaction prevailed in Greece. Consequently, on June 24, 1925, a coup d'état occurred in Greece. Theodoros Pangalos who was a supporter of Eleftherios Venizelos, overthrew the monarchy and appointed himself dictator and later on had himself elected president in 1926. During this time, in Montreal, immigrants felt so strongly connected to their homeland's politics that following the Greek coup d'état, the community divided into two groups, one (Loyalists) upholding King Constantine and the Venizelists⁹³. This caused the creation of separate Greek churches and schools in Montreal⁹⁴. The community reunified in 1931 only to divide again in 1967 during the Greek military coup⁹⁵. During the 1980s the Hellenic Community of Montreal restructured itself and became the administrator of the four Greek orthodox churches⁹⁶. The Hellenic Community

⁹³ Tamis & Gavaki: 2002, pp. 187 & 254

⁹⁴ *ibid*

⁹⁵ Tamis & Gavaki: 2002, pp. 187-188 & 254

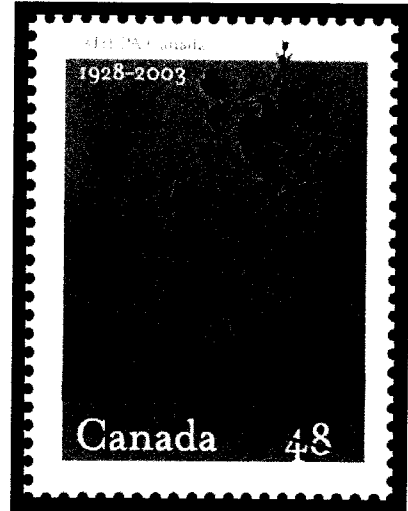
⁹⁶ Tamis & Gavaki: 2002, pp. 188

was attempting to unify Greek Montrealers in an endeavor to create cultural and political stability and homogeneity⁹⁷.

2.5 The Adaptation to Canadian living

Maintenance of the Canadian Greek ethnic groups weighs heavily on immigrants' life choices in regards to their children. In the 80s, Greeks head one of the highest rates of retention of ethnic identity in Canada, in fact, 90% of Greek marriages within Quebec were intra-community based⁹⁸. By creating institutions that teach a certain ideal of Greek heritage to Canadian born Greeks, a particular image of "Greekness" became established. As Tamis and Gavaki explain, the Greece remembered and promoted by Canadian immigrants has remained static in their memories whereas the actual Greece has evolved over the years, "The immigrants held tight to what they knew because it allowed them to assert their identity and their nationality, providing them with roots, continuity and *Greekness*"⁹⁹. Thus in attempting to pass on traditional Greek culture to their children, Canadian immigrants have become more Greek than the Greeks.

Simultaneously, in order to survive in their new environment, immigrant Greeks have had to compromise by incorporating Canadian aspects into their ways of life. Greeks have retained their culture's individualism and yet accepted



⁹⁷ Tamis & Gavaki: 2002, pp. 189

⁹⁸ Tamis & Gavaki: 2002, pp. 316

⁹⁹ Tamis & Gavaki: 2002, pp. 255

to cooperate with other groups. They maintained their generosity, hospitality, warmth, spontaneity and family focus while incorporating order, organization, discipline, punctuality and tolerance and respect of differences¹⁰⁰. Researchers such as Tamis & Gavaki claim that by being exposed to multiethnic environments Greek immigrants have become citizens of the world rather than centered on their nation and race¹⁰¹. The American Hellenic Educational Progressive Association (AHEPA) commemorative stamp (previous page) illustrates what Gavaki hopes will be “ the dynamic immigrant seed, planted in the fertile Canadian society, [which] will produce trees and fruits nourished by the new culture, conditions and opportunities”¹⁰². According to AHEPA, the stamp (designed in part by a Greek immigrant Kosta (Gus) Tsetsekas) represents an ancient Greek form of art in which an individual is seen releasing a bird, which stands as a metaphor of the immigration journey undertaken by many Greeks to Canada. Moreover, the maple leaf and olive branch in its beak represents the interlacing of the two cultures and societies¹⁰³.

2.6 Mr. Persephone

Amidst this literature review, I would like to take a moment to introduce a transcribed monologue from one of my main collaborators, who I have given the pseudonym of Monsieur Persephone. He was kind enough to explain to me by way of a story what the concept of “Greekness” meant to him. Mr. Persephone is

¹⁰⁰ Tamis & Gavaki: 2002, pp. 256-257

¹⁰¹ *ibid*

¹⁰² Tamis & Gavaki: 2002, pp. 322

¹⁰³ American Hellenic Educational Progressive Association. 2003. Ahepa Family in Canada, AHEPA Commemorative Stamp.

the head of a Montreal-Greek household. I was lucky enough to be accepted into this gentleman's home on several occasions as a friend and scholar. Over dinner and a digestif of ouzo one night, he explained to me in a voice filled with passion that Greece is not just the geographical land made of sand, mountains, earth, rock, trees or grass, it is a people, no matter where they live.

He told me the tale of the creation of the inhabitants of Thebes:

Cadmos, a mighty leader and warrior sent a dozen men to fetch water from a Spring which belonged to Ares. Ares' son, a Serpent, who dutifully guarded this spring killed Cadmos' men for their insolence. To avenge his men, Cadmos killed the Serpent. Athena then came to him and told him to plant, as though seeds, the Serpent's teeth into the soil, which he did. From this sowing sprang up the first of the Spartoi who fought each other till only few remained. These became the ancestors of all Thebans. "We come from the earth" Said Monsieur Persephone, "we are the earth, we are Greece". "We take her with us everywhere we go".

Chapter Three: Cultural Property Rights: Legal Treatise

3.1 Cultural property laws & private versus public art collecting

The Elgin Marbles debate dates back to times prior to today's standard cultural property laws. Although conventions have existed for centuries forbidding the removal of vanquished communities' cultural property by invaders, they have had little if any effect. Today's most widely subscribed to cultural property laws are the 1954 Hague Convention and the 1970 UNESCO Agreements. These laws have kindled debate and theoretical analysis as to the question of who owns cultural property. Merryman suggests that the concept of "world heritage" where cultural property belongs to humanity is most prevalent in the Hague Convention while the UNESCO Agreements take on a more nationalistic stance. Other scholars disagree with the entire premise of cultural property and would rather see heritage pieces belong to communities and not institutions. Finally, this section will look into the clash between the concept of private collecting and archeology and whether these terms are truly exclusive.

3.1.1 1954 Hague Convention

The 1954 Hague convention had as its goal to "[prohibit] reprisals against the cultural property of a member nation and [to prohibit] the export of cultural items from an occupied country... the occupying force has an obligation to actively take all necessary measures to prevent export by any person or nation. Any items that are taken are to be returned at the close of hostilities"¹⁰⁴. Merryman quotes the Hague convention explaining how this law reinforces the

¹⁰⁴ Hutt, Blanco, and Stern: 2004, pp.193

concept of “cultural internationalism” and “world heritage” as opposed to nationalism:

Being convinced that damage to cultural belongings to any people whatsoever means damage to the cultural heritage of all mankind, since each people makes its contribution to the culture of the world; Considering that the preservation of the cultural heritage is of great importance for all people of the world and that it is important that this heritage should receive international protection¹⁰⁵.

Jamie Litvak King agrees with Merryman’s concept of “world heritage”, she believes that humanity owns cultural property and that one nation alone has no particular claim on its people’s works¹⁰⁶. Nevertheless, Merryman explains that the more recent cultural property agreements called the UNESCO conventions no longer center around the paradigm of “world heritage”; instead they convey the importance of nationalism.

3.1.2 1970 UNESCO Agreements

The 1970s UNESCO agreements on cultural property preservation have as their goal the suppression of illegal¹⁰⁷ and illicit¹⁰⁸ cultural property exports from source nations but this agreement is not retroactive¹⁰⁹. Out of the 58 original signatories only two were market nations (Canada and the United States), the rest (mostly ‘third world’ nations) are considered source nations. This agreement limits the flow of cultural property from source nations to market nations, hence few market nations have joined. Merryman explains how the focus on “national

¹⁰⁵ Merryman: 2000, pp.73

¹⁰⁶ Messenger: 1999, pp.199

¹⁰⁷ Illegal: undocumented removals of cultural property from source nation.

¹⁰⁸ Illicit: documented items that may not be removed from the country of origin, however once smuggled out, their documents may grant the items legal status in the market nation. Merryman is not opposed to the illicit trade of cultural property.

¹⁰⁹ Merryman: 2000, pp. 79-80

cultural heritage” as opposed to “world heritage” leads the UNESCO convention to endorse “destructive retention”¹¹⁰. He defines “destructive retention” as the practice whereby historical art remains within source nations regardless of the fact that they do not have the facilities or resources to care for their cultural property¹¹¹. He believes that instead of permitting cultural property to deteriorate by leaving it in the care of source nations these artifacts and monuments should be removed from their places of origin in order to preserve them¹¹². According to the convention, the loss of cultural property due to improper care is regrettable however, the loss of the items through export would be even worse¹¹³. Other scholars such as Barkan & Bush argue that the concept of nationalism has only recently (1980s) overthrown the ideology of cultural internationalism that prevails in the UNESCO agreements¹¹⁴.

Other criticisms of the UNESCO agreements come from scholars such as St. Clair who state that the definition of what constitutes cultural property is too materialistic and bound by western biases¹¹⁵. A recurring critique of this agreement stems from the fact that there is no international means for enforcing this law, each country is responsible for imposing the UNESCO ascribed punishments and fines. Therefore, the level of leniency and interpretation of the UNESCO conventions is left to the museum directors. These directors are placed in a paradoxical position, if they are too stringent about artifact documentation

¹¹⁰ Merryman: 2000, pp.83

¹¹¹ ibid

¹¹² ibid

¹¹³ Merryman: 2000, pp.84

¹¹⁴ Barkan& Bush: 2002, pp.22

¹¹⁵ St. Clair: 1998, pp.332-336

policies and pass up items on ethical grounds that end up in competing museums they lose their jobs, and if they are too lenient in applying the UNESCO guidelines, whatever ethical dilemmas the museum may encounter in later years will rest on their shoulders¹¹⁶.

Most archeologists and historians agree that it is essential for all countries to sign the 1970 UNESCO agreements. Moreover, Renfrew argues throughout his book how important it is for the British government to ascribe to the UNESCO conventions. He explains how several public agencies and recognized scholars have advised the government to ratify the convention¹¹⁷. The British government signed the 1970 UNESCO agreement in 2002 (one year after the publication of Renfrew's book) following the recommendations of the advisory panel set up by DCMS to look at the extent of the arts market trade in the UK¹¹⁸. The panel found that most of the market transactions are honorable but they did find evidence of illicit actions. In explaining the rationale behind the signing of the UNESCO agreement, Tessa Blackstone a British politician was quoted saying: "we are sending a strong warning to those who do so much damage to the *world's cultural heritage* that the UK is serious about joining the international effort to stamp out illicit trade in cultural objects" (emphasis added)¹¹⁹. Although endorsing an agreement that is defined by some as nationalistic in principle, the British government still insists on advocating the concept of "world cultural heritage". No

¹¹⁶ Messenger: 1999, pp.98

¹¹⁷ Renfrew: 2001, pp 65-67

¹¹⁸ British Government Website

¹¹⁹ British Government Website, Para 2.

matter which laws are in effect or what political wars are being waged, Vitelli and Colwell-Chanthaphonh argue that none have a lasting effect on cultural property rights and that “the worse enemy of humanity’s noblest works is still humanity itself”¹²⁰.

3.2 Archeologists and Private Collectors

Was lord Elgin an archeologist or a private collector? What is the difference between the two? George E. Stuart defines an archeologist as someone who researches the past through material objects and a collector as someone who gathers historical objects for a variety of reasons¹²¹. He explains that monetary goals in collecting privately are relatively recent; previously in “the age of innocence” the art collector assembled pieces to create “a highly informative collection of artifacts”¹²². The new financial drive of collectors has pegged them as the profiteering enemy of altruistic archeologists. However, this is much too simplistic. Stuart explains how the line that divides who is truly preserving culture and who is in it for personal gain is not as black and white as collectors versus archeologists¹²³. Vitelli & Colwell-Chanthaphonh explain how site preservation is not always at the forefront of archeologists’ minds when excavating¹²⁴, whereas many collectors make their items available to universities for analysis and education. In fact, many members of the public have no idea what the difference is between tomb robbers, collectors and archeologists. Stuart

¹²⁰ Vitelli and Colwell-Chanthaphonh: 2006, pp.149

¹²¹ Messenger: 1999, pp.250

¹²² Messenger: 1999, pp.246

¹²³ Messenger: 1999, pp.248

¹²⁴ Vitelli & Colwell-Chanthaphonh: 2006, pp.241

criticizes academia for not better informing the public about the worth of archeology and how this discipline betters societies¹²⁵. Lynn Meskell warns against focusing on past civilizations to the detriment of present communities¹²⁶. Moreover, this author believes more would be accomplished if archeologists and collectors could find a compromise instead of bickering over private collecting rights versus public ownership¹²⁷. George Stuart, Lynn Meskell and Livak King believe that public education is the key to preserving and emphasizing the importance of cultural property¹²⁸.

As mentioned previously, museums cannot be disassociated from the art market; they are capitalistic enterprises not unlike private collectors¹²⁹. Carman suggests an alternative to state and private ownership, which would benefit the entire society: communal ownership¹³⁰. He claims that the ownership of heritage is an oxymoron since heritage is in essence the notions of 'ours' whereas property signifies 'my heritage not yours'. He explains his position as follows: "archeological heritage falls within the category of those objects where exclusive ownership may be inappropriate"¹³¹. Through communal ownership all members of society would be equally responsible for the maintenance of their material heritage. Carman states: "Choosing to exercise restraint on one's own use of a resource does not serve to deny it completely: but it does create the conditions

¹²⁵ Messenger: 1999, pp.251

¹²⁶ Cantwell, Friedlander & Tramm: 2000, pp.147

¹²⁷ Messenger: 1999, pp.250

¹²⁸ Messenger: 1999, pp.209 & 251

¹²⁹ Carman: 2005, pp.17-33

¹³⁰ Carman: 2005, pp.33

¹³¹ Carman: 2005, pp.33

under which others may have access to it as well... when the value is a social value held by all, then to conserve the resource no one need be granted any right of ownership"¹³². Moreover, his concept of "reflexivity, multivocality, interactivity and contextuality" in archeological methodology implies the need to incorporate "natives" into archeological digs¹³³. By "keeping while giving" a new level of trust can be established between "natives" and archeologists. Carman explains the steps needed to accomplish this task: socializing, maintaining a presence in the community outside of excavation seasons, employing locals in the excavations and in outreach programs and most importantly ensuring that finds are displayed in local museums.

3.3 Politics

Inevitably, politics play a major role in the decision making in regards to the return of the marbles. Through the act of ownership and stewardship of the Marbles, the British museum has gained international acclaim and prestige. Many authors believe that through ownership of such monumental historical artworks, the state gains authority and the British nation becomes the de-facto heir to the Golden Era of Classical Greece. Moreover, the monetary issues revolving around tourism brought in by the Elgins creates cynical responses by certain authors at the nationalistic Greek claims. Additionally, the commodification of sacred or cultural important artifacts such as the Elgins of the source countries by host countries causes source nations to question why it is

¹³² Carman: 2005, pp.115-116

¹³³ Carman: 2005, pp.89

their heritage which is being commodified at their expense to the benefit of the 'first world'.

3.4 State Ownership

As established by most authors, Greek political incentives permeate the case for the return of the marbles. Carman explains that state ownership of cultural property emphasizes the community's sense of heritage and asserts the state as the sole carrier of tradition, thus affirming its natural authority¹³⁴. Moreover, the symbolic meaning of state owned objects serve to create a stock of cultural capital¹³⁵. More than just symbolic capital, the Elgins would bring in tourism capital were they to return to Greece¹³⁶. King proposes that the Greek government's push for the Elgins repatriation is solely based on tourism and is not in line with the Greek populace who has no particular attachment to these particular pieces¹³⁷.

3.5 Representing Cultures and Commodifying Cultural Property

The commodification of cultural property is what happens when the art market appropriates a sacred, symbolic or communal item. Carman explains it by classifying cultural property in the genre of the Elgin Marbles as a gift from the creator to his/her people. He quotes Marcel Mauss' definition of a gift as something which must be given from one person to another (and so forth) and an item that must be consumed by the receiver by way of the giver, "the gift that is

¹³⁴ Carman: 2005, pp.76

¹³⁵ *ibid*

¹³⁶ Cantwell, Friedlander & Tramm: 2000, pp.147-148, 151-158 & Merryman: 2000, pp.111

¹³⁷ King: 2006, pp.264

not used up [or passed on] will be lost [i.e. will cease to be a gift] while the other one that is passed along remains abundant by establishing a circle of reciprocity”¹³⁸. The great distinction between the commodity and the gift is that the gift leaves the giver empty but for the anticipation of eventual reciprocity whereas the commodity is a one-way street that turns profit. Thus when museums transfer the concept of gift (from the artists to the public) into property the symbolism that maintains communities is abolished. “If ‘Property is Theft’ then the category of Cultural Property should be considered no less than the theft of culture”¹³⁹. Merryman questions whether the British are indeed appropriating the culture associated with the Elgin, ever since they were first exposed they were presented as extraordinary works of Greek artists¹⁴⁰. He does not believe that the British Museum is misrepresenting the Greek culture; in fact he sees their care and presentation as a form of artistic admiration¹⁴¹.

Vitelli & Colwell-Chanthaphonh add that the commoditization of ‘third world’ artifacts is due to the concept of the ‘west and the rest’¹⁴². These author explain it is the polarization of world power that explains why none of the western cultures’ symbolic artifacts are being commoditized. Merryman opposed this concept of commoditization lessening cultural objects by explaining that since there will always be an art market, the world should get used to this sort of

¹³⁸ Carman: 2005, pp.43

¹³⁹ Carman: 2005, pp.44

¹⁴⁰ Merryman: 2000, pp.53-54

¹⁴¹ *ibid*

¹⁴² Vitelli & Colwell-Chanthaphonh: 2006, pp.190-191

treatment¹⁴³. This author goes on to blame archeologists' campaign against the antiques' market as the reason for the reinforcement of "exaggerated cultural nationalism, excessive source nation retentionism and the atmosphere of sentimentality, romance and rhetoric that sustains them"¹⁴⁴. However, in the case of items considered sacred to their homeland, there are limited ways that they may be employed according to international museum managerial standards¹⁴⁵. Hamilakis describes the Elgins in his book as sacred to the Greek nation and thus, Greeks were deeply disturbed by the disrespect offered them when in the year 2000 the British Museum, in an attempt at increasing its revenue, started to rent-out the Elgin Marbles' room to corporate events and even rented Greek costumes for the occasions¹⁴⁶. This was seen as incredibly disrespectful by the Greek people and government not to mention many British delegates. The mixing of the sacred Marbles with the profane bodily function of consumption was a great misery to the Greek people.

¹⁴³ Merryman: 2000, pp.281 & 217

¹⁴⁴ Merryman: 2000, pp.281

¹⁴⁵ Hutt, Blanco, and Stern: 2004, pp.138

¹⁴⁶ Hamilakis: 2007, pp.265-267

Chapter Four: British and Greek Arguments

4.1 British Museum Standpoint



British Museum Elgin Marbles Display

4.1.1 Legalities

As previously mentioned, The British Museum purchased the Parthenon Marbles from Lord Elgin in 1816 following an in-depth inquiry as to the legality of Elgin's ownership of the artifacts¹⁴⁷. Some scholars claim that Lord Elgin should have sought out permission from the Greeks prior to removing the sculptures from the Parthenon but King thinks this argument is absurd since he had no way of knowing that the Greeks would gain independence in the future¹⁴⁸. In opposition to King's argument, Hugh Hammersley (a member of the British parliament committee who decided on the purchase of the Elgins) had proposed

¹⁴⁷ King: 2006, pp.287

¹⁴⁸ King: 2006, pp.269

that the Marbles should be held only until Greece gained independence at which time they should be returned to Athens¹⁴⁹. Although his proposition was not accepted, it is unlikely that he was the only one to predict the Greek independence. As St. Clair explains, during the reign of the Ottomans, any question of retribution of the Marbles would be unfounded however, now that the Greeks are independent, the case for the return can take on a new imposing tone¹⁵⁰.

As is explained by Hutt, Blanco and Stern, the legality of ownership of archeological objects purchased by museums is only as definite as the previous owner's proprietary proof. In other words, all a donor can transfer is his/her title of ownership (and the attached insecurities thereupon); there is no greater interest in the title of gift than that which was held the donor. This proof must be provided in written form either as a contract or personal correspondence. These authors further claim that it is the Museum's duty to track down the chain of ownership of items they intend to acquire in order to prevent third party claims of ownership. The chain of title, which spans centuries on certain pieces, is most often incomplete, in these cases the museum must work towards having a "better title than anyone else"¹⁵¹. It is indicated that if the item is found to legally belong to a third party it is the museum that is liable for the full fair market value; hereafter the museum may track down the original seller to claim remuneration. The ICOM (International Council of Museums) also recommends that museums not acquire

¹⁴⁹ Merryman: 1987, pp.135

¹⁵⁰ St. Clair: 1998, pp.332

¹⁵¹ Hutt, Blanco, and Stern: 2004, pp.136

items with unverifiable or unachievable valid title¹⁵². However, since the case of the Elgin Marbles arose before the recognition of these standards, many of the legalities associated with this situation are highly debatable and the question of whether retrospective thinking is applicable also brings scholars to a stalemate. One of Elgin's strongest effects on contemporary artifact looting is said to be the creation of a tradition in which governments finance pillaging and purchase artifacts from collectors who are in financial or legal difficulty¹⁵³. For example, in the United States pillaged goods can be donated to museum in exchange for tax deductions¹⁵⁴.

In order to retain ownership of the marbles, The British Museum has put forth two well-known arguments: firstly, they claim that Lord Elgin acted to the benefit of humanity by removing the Parthenon Marbles from the Acropolis where they were perishing due to poor preservation policies by the Ottomans and subsequently the Greek government. The British Museum claims to be a better steward of these pieces. Secondly, the British Museum advocates the concept of the Universal Museum that permits museum-goers the benefit of exposure to art from throughout the world under one roof. It is also well documented that the British Museum refuses to retribute the Marbles in fear of setting universal precedents for the return of other artifacts acquired by ex-colonialist countries.

¹⁵² Hutt, Blanco, and Stern: 2004, pp.160

¹⁵³ Atwood: 2004, pp.141.

¹⁵⁴ *ibid*

4.1.2 Preservation and the British Cleaning Scandal

The major argument for the retention of the Marbles by the British Museum is their claim of superior stewardship. By transporting the Parthenon Marbles to England, the British Museum claims that Elgin was acting to the benefit of humanity by preserving human heritage for all to appreciate. Merryman argues that since the Marbles are well cared for by the British Museum the sound position is not to change a situation unless there is a logical reason for doing so¹⁵⁵. The superior stewardship claim is supported by King who argues that the Elgins are much better preserved than the pieces that remain *in situ*; case in point: the two sister Caryatids, one in pristine condition is displayed in England while the other has weathered on the Acropolis in its original location. This author also expresses disdain for artifact preservation techniques and museum organization in Greece. Other scholars have brought forth the idea that this genre of patriarchal thinking is a new version of “the white man’s burden”¹⁵⁶. Browning explains how Greece may not be a rich country, and it may have more antiquities to care for than many other countries, however, no “expense and no effort is being spared to stabilise, conserve, and where possible to restore the greatest masterpiece of Greek architecture and sculpture”¹⁵⁷. Due to the elevated environmental pollutants, the British Museum claims that the restoration of the Elgins to their original locations on the Parthenon would cause them to rapidly

¹⁵⁵ Merryman: 200, pp.51

¹⁵⁶ Cantwell, Friedlander & Tramm: 2000, pp.149-150

¹⁵⁷ Browning: 2008, pp.14

deteriorate¹⁵⁸. Robert Browning challenges this argument claiming that England itself was notoriously polluted until the 1950¹⁵⁹. Merryman also proposes that the focus on preservation (which he himself advocates) may be based on a Western paradigm not shared by the original creators of the Marbles¹⁶⁰. Perhaps they were meant to degrade on the Acropolis as Byron believed.

Hutt, Blanco, and Stern define the museum's role to "care, manage, and exhibit the collection for the benefit of the institution, the public, and the donors" and that "the care of the collection reflects the commitment of the museum to its mission"¹⁶¹. These authors state that the Elgins have been recently shown to be "suffering from deterioration in the [British] museum environment" and that the museum's lack of funds prohibits them from altering this situation¹⁶². Carman reminds his readers not to dissociate museums from the art market: even if they are an educational institution they are still in the business of making money¹⁶³. Also some commentators have claimed that since the Elgin marbles have no strong cultural connection to the British there is no emotional obligation to care for them¹⁶⁴. Neils and King would contest this argument stating that both the British and the Greek cultures are historically and culturally bound to the

¹⁵⁸ Merryman: 200, pp.51

¹⁵⁹ Merryman: 1987

¹⁶⁰ Merryman: 200, pp.98, 112-113

¹⁶¹ Hutt, Blanco, and Stern: 2004, pp.149

¹⁶² *ibid*

¹⁶³ Carman: 2005, pp.17-33

¹⁶⁴ *ibid*

Elgins¹⁶⁵. More to the point, the particular event that has challenged the English claim of superior stewardship is the 1930s 'Cleaning Scandal'.

Ancient Greek Art is recognized for being pure white, however, originally, marbles sculpture were painted bright colors. In order to permit paint to adhere to the marble surface, a gesso (or patina) was applied to the sculptural surfaces. Over time, the paint of the Parthenon Marbles has faded away yet the more resilient gesso partially remains. This covering gives the statues an appearance of colored patchiness. St. Clair explains that the Greek marbles were unjustly compared by the British museum-goers to the standard of Italian marbles which contain less iron and look whiter¹⁶⁶. St. Clair suggests that this dreary effect may have to do with the difference in the quality of the light in London as compared to the dazzling brightness, which shines and reflects off the sculptures on the Acropolis. In order to reestablish the symbolic notion of purity associated with classical marbles, the British Museum attempted to clean the Marbles by removing their patina using metal chisels, brushes and chemicals, which caused permanent damage¹⁶⁷. Hamilakis suggests that the British Museum had unsuccessfully attempted to conceal this negligence¹⁶⁸. King rebukes this argument explaining that the marbles had been moved to the basement of the museum not to 'cover-up' the cleaning scandal but to protect them from

¹⁶⁵ Neils: 2001, pp 244 & King: 2006, pp.288

¹⁶⁶ St. Clair: 1998, pp.290

¹⁶⁷ Hamilakis : 2007, pp.261

¹⁶⁸ ibid

impending Nazi bombardments¹⁶⁹. Moreover she questions the authenticity of the patina¹⁷⁰. King explains that the disclosure of the 1930 cleaning scandal was due to museum policies of public openness, and not as is often thought due to a journalistic leak. She explains that these British governmental public transparency policies are not shared by Greece or Italy who both still utilize the cleaning methods that the British Museum is being condemned for having used seventy years ago. Following this scandal, the Greek government has turned the 'good stewardship' argument on its head and requested the restitution of the Marbles due to the poor preservation practices employed by the British Museum.

4.1.3 Universal Museum & Access

The main goal of any museum is public education. King argues that having several countries' art under one roof facilitates global understanding. In 2003 the British Museum created the 'Declaration on the Importance and Value of Universal Museums' which was signed by eighteen major western museums with the purpose of advocating the 'universality' of the pieces on display while providing a resource against national fundamentalism. The director of the British Museum stated in a 2003 conference of the Museum Association in Brighton that "this is one of the roles of a universal museum, to refuse to allow objects to be appropriated to one particular political agenda"¹⁷¹. King advocates the concept of Universal Museums and explains that such institutions stand for the free trade of

¹⁶⁹ King: 2006, pp.292

¹⁷⁰ ibid

¹⁷¹ Hamilakis: 2007, pp.269-270

knowledge that came forth out of the Enlightenment era¹⁷². King also opposed nationalism, which would have local art displayed in local museums solely. Merryman concurs with King explaining that preservation outweighs other considerations. He advocates the concept of 'human heritage' and claims that cultural nationalism is "(1) a relic of the 19th century Romanticism that (2) has a superficial sentimental appeal that (3) gives it disproportionate influence in cultural policy determinations"¹⁷³. Other archeologists discredit the argument that by restricting the export of cultural artifacts countries deny themselves trade opportunities and inhibit the cultural advancement of the rest of the world. Barkan & Bush explain that museums hoard artifacts and display only a small percentage of what they own¹⁷⁴. In opposition to the Universal Museum, certain scholars have stated that retaining art within countries of origin does not limit the global public's knowledge of these cultures, through inter-museum loans and the legal sale with governmental clearance of a limited number of surplus artifacts the same educational results could be achieved¹⁷⁵.

Another supporting argument for the British Museum involves the accessibility of the Marbles to the general public. In order to educate the masses museums are required to be open a certain amount of hours¹⁷⁶. King criticizes the Acropolis Museum's ticket price and operating hours claiming that the British Museum with its free admission is much better placed to offer the public access

¹⁷² King: 2006, pp.307

¹⁷³ Merryman: 2000, pp.120

¹⁷⁴ Barkan & Bush : 2002, pp.31-32.

¹⁷⁵ Renfrew: 2001, pp.21

¹⁷⁶ Hutt, Blanco, and Stern: 2004, pp.142

to the Marbles¹⁷⁷. The New Acropolis Museum opened its doors in June of 2009, its operating hours are 8.00 a.m. to 8.00 p.m. everyday except Mondays and ticket prices have been set at one Euro until November at which point they will be increased¹⁷⁸. The British Museum galleries are open daily from 10.00 am to 5:30 pm and admission is free¹⁷⁹. However, the concept of accessibility begs the question of accessibility to whom? Merryman explains that the nationalism argument bring forth the intrinsic value of cultural property relating to cultural identity and continuance within history. He explains that this argument sees the lack of artifacts and art in Greece as being “culturally impoverished”¹⁸⁰. However, Merryman opposes this argument stating that there is no “magic” in the real items that cannot be felt through the reproductions and illustrations that are widely available in Greece¹⁸¹. Moreover he suggests that deeper reasons for the Elgins’ return are founded in economic and political agendas as opposed to cultural ones¹⁸².

4.1.4 Precedents & Compromises

The Elgin Marbles have become not only a symbol of Greek and British identity, but also emblems of unrepatriated cultural property. The outcome of the legal debate over the Marbles is largely believed to set the bar for museum cultural property repartitions globally. Hence, the British Museum does not want to set precedence by returning the Marbles to Greece. They claim that such an

¹⁷⁷ King: 2006, pp.304

¹⁷⁸ Athens Greece Guide: The New Acropolis Museum. 2003-2007

¹⁷⁹ The British Museum Website, Visiting, Admission and opening times.

¹⁸⁰ Merryman: 2000, pp.53

¹⁸¹ Merryman: 2000, pp.54

¹⁸² Merryman: 2000, pp54

event would cause the hemorrhaging of universal museum collections¹⁸³. Neils believes this argument to be largely overused and exaggerated since Greece only seeks the return of the Elgins when it could just as easily demand that the entirety of its native art be restored¹⁸⁴. Moreover, Hamilakis presents the fact that the University of Heidelberg returned a fragment of the north Frieze in 2006 which it had in its collection for decades, thus breaking the “silent agreement among those in possession of [the Parthenon fragments]”¹⁸⁵. The Greek government has guaranteed the British government that if the Elgins were to be returned it would not let the British Museum’s Elgin wing stay empty: it offered to accommodate the British by sending antiquities (Athens Metro excavations) which have never been seen outside of Greece in rotating loaned exhibitions¹⁸⁶. Moreover, the Greek government has offered to send Britain a permanent loan of antiquities if the British Museum agrees to ‘permanently loan’ the marble to the Acropolis Museum which would be displayed in a wing ‘belonging in title’ to the British Museum¹⁸⁷. King rebukes this argument calling a permanent loan an oxymoron¹⁸⁸. She explains how there ought to be a statute of limitations on cultural property restitution in order to prevent the creation of a slippery slope¹⁸⁹. Both Messenger and Neils clarify how the creation of an official statute of limitations in the matter of cultural property restitution is a very complicated and

¹⁸³ Merryman: 2000, pp.35

¹⁸⁴ Neils: 2001, pp. 247-248

¹⁸⁵ Hamilakis: 2007, pp.272

¹⁸⁶ Hamilakis: 2007, pp.263

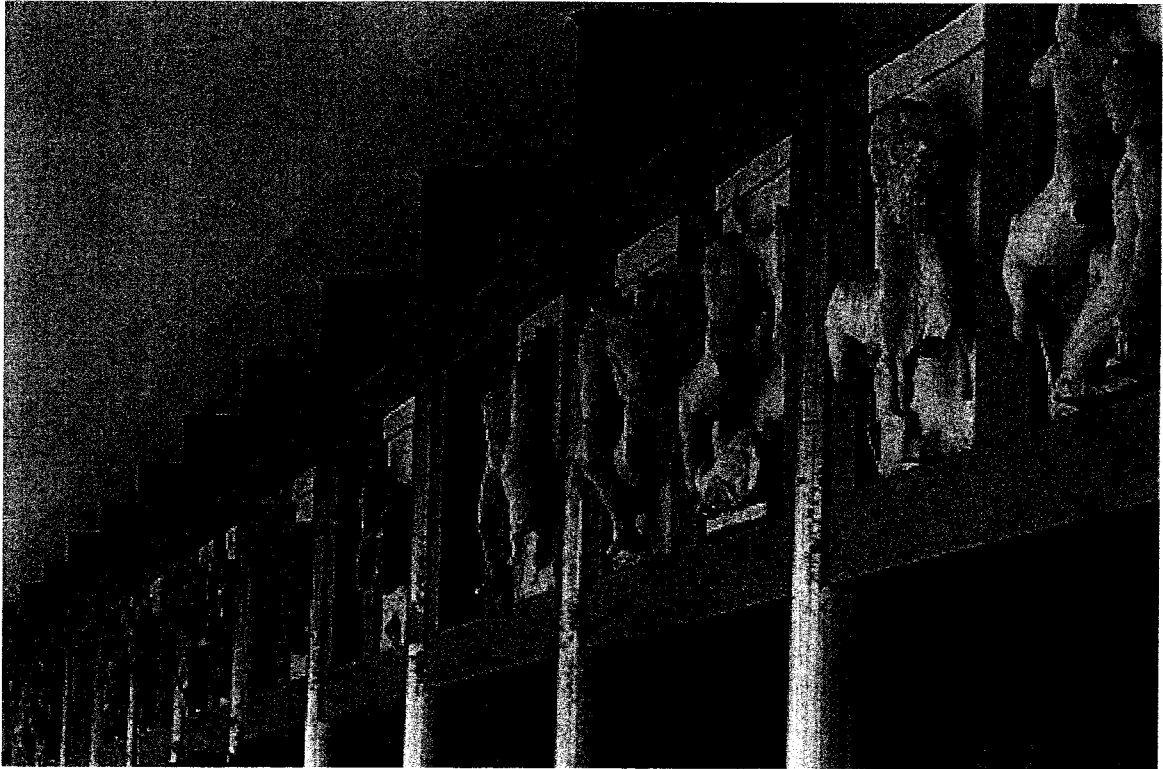
¹⁸⁷ ibid

¹⁸⁸ King: 2006, pp.297

¹⁸⁹ King: 2006, pp.301

often easily manipulated law not to mention inapplicable to culturally hypersensitive items¹⁹⁰.

4.2 Greek Government Standpoint



Parthenon Marbles Exhibition, New Acropolis Museum, Athens

The Greek government has spent almost two hundred years countering the argument presented by the British Museum against the return of the Marbles. It has refuted the British claim of superior stewardship on the grounds of the cleaning scandal and has dismantled the integrity of the “Universal Museum” concept by associating such western perspectives with neocolonialism. Its main ground for the restitution has been founded on the models of integrity and context. Integrity is the claim that *object d’arts* are best experienced in their entirety in the way that the artist intended it to be perceived, thus, the Parthenon

¹⁹⁰ Neils: 2001, pp.241

can only be truly understood and appreciated with its decorative sculptures relocated to its surroundings. The maintenance of the original context of the Parthenon and its sculptures is also a major stance of the Greek government. They contend that to truly grasp the profound importance of the Parthenon in the way originally intended, the decorative pieces must remain in their original location. Hence, to reestablish the Parthenon as fatefully as possible in its original shape and its original context would permit a better understanding and enjoyment of these unique pieces of Greek art.

4.2.1 Integrity

Most archeological literature emphasizes how important it is to preserve the original milieu of archeological items in order to understand the cultural contextualization. Without context artifacts become individual *object d'arts* admired for their aesthetics yet having lost all capacity to educate the public about human heritage¹⁹¹. According to the Greek government who argues in favor of artistic and cultural integrity, the removal of the Elgins from their place of origin robs both the Parthenon and the Elgins of the full symbolic meanings intended by their creators¹⁹². Whelan & Moore question the authenticity of reconstituted monuments comparing the validity of the unified pieces to Frankenstein's monster: is the monster real simply because its bits come from living beings¹⁹³? Some scholars, King in particular, defend the British Museum's position by arguing that pieces from the Parthenon are being held in museums

¹⁹¹ Renfrew: 2001, pp.19

¹⁹² Messenger: 1999, pp.9

¹⁹³ Whelan & Moore:2006, pp.116

throughout the world, and even if these pieces could all be returned, they could not be reintegrated into the Parthenon because of the atmospheric pollution¹⁹⁴. Merryman concurs by questioning whether the transfer of the Marbles from one museum to another validates the question of integrity¹⁹⁵. Moreover this particular scholar suggests that even if they were to be reestablished onto the Parthenon, the state of deterioration of the pieces which remained in Greece as compared to those which were cared for in England would make the sense of unity impossible and lead to criticism of Greek preservation efforts¹⁹⁶. Hamilakis refutes the concept that since the Elgin cannot be reattached to the Parthenon the integrity argument is incoherent. He reveals that the new 'state of the art' Acropolis Museum was constructed below the Acropolis, which permits the wing that is being reserved for the Elgins to have a direct line of sight with the Parthenon permitting a sense of unity, which is lacking at the British Museum¹⁹⁷. Browning goes so far as to reproach the British Government for their argument against the Parthenon's integrity by stating that it is Elgin's fault that the Parthenon can no longer be reunified¹⁹⁸. In removing the Metopes from the Parthenon Frieze, King explains that Elgin detached the block backings in order to remove extra weight for the transport and in doing so he prevented the relief carvings from ever being remounted on the Frieze¹⁹⁹

¹⁹⁴ King: 2006, pp.303

¹⁹⁵ Merryman: 2000, pp.115

¹⁹⁶ *ibid*

¹⁹⁷ Hamilakis: 2007, pp.259-260

¹⁹⁸ Merryman: 1987, pp.136 & King: 2006, pp.253

¹⁹⁹ King: 2006, pp.253

4.2.2 Representation, Identity Appropriation & Neo-Colonialism

One of the major points of tension in regards to the concept of the “universal museum” is related to the ethnocentrism associated with the method with which western museums represent cultures. Scholars deem it necessary to question why the British government feels it has the right to represent humanity’s heritage and why it believes it can grasp the intricacies of each of the societies’ unique cultural property it possesses²⁰⁰. In so doing, the concept of the ‘universal museum’ is often tied to ideas of neo-colonialism. Many scholars from ‘third world’ countries have challenged the idea of ‘scientific archeology’ by claiming that no heritage institution is ever objective since history itself is always subjective²⁰¹. Moreover, Britain having been the world’s greatest colonialist country has stocked its museums with unique and culturally valuable artifacts from former colonies²⁰². Owing to the polarization of political and financial power, few ‘third world’ countries have the means to force ‘first world’ countries into restituting their cultural property²⁰³. Neils explains how losing the marbles to Greece would be like losing the “jewels in [the British Museum’s] crown”; a metaphor often employed when referring to the colonialist appropriation of India²⁰⁴. Renfrew explains that past societies did not feel the need to protect and conserve their ancient artifacts resulting in the loss of historically significant items

²⁰⁰ Hamilakis: 2007, pp.270-271

²⁰¹ Vitelli & Colwell-Chanthaphonh: 2006, pp.186

²⁰² Renfrew: 2001, pp.18

²⁰³ Vitelli & Colwell-Chanthaphonh: 2006, pp.186-187

²⁰⁴ Neils: 2001, pp.244

to conquerors²⁰⁵. The Greek government no longer petitions the English government directly; instead they are seeking public support and wish to include the marbles in a form of “international post-colonization restitution regime”²⁰⁶. The Greek media is unified in anti-colonialist stances against the British government and demand the return of the Marbles²⁰⁷. Visitors to the Acropolis museum are handed out leaflets on the Greek government’s position on the restitution of the Elgins²⁰⁸. This strategy goes hand in hand with Whelan and Moore’s philosophy on viewing relocated monuments in museums: viewers should be made to reflect on the items not only as symbols of the past but also in terms of present day reallocation concerns²⁰⁹.

The Marbles serve, according to certain researchers, as a symbol of British prestige since the Elgins connect the iconic Classical Greek cultural heritage to the English people. In this way, the British are seen as the descendents to the greatest intellectuals in history. According to Whelan & Moore, the demolishing, transporting, reconstructing and amalgamating of full or partial monuments with other artifacts in novel displays transforms them into signs and not heritage²¹⁰. St. Clair expresses this viewpoint as follows: “The Elgin marble had now become a symbol of Greece’s ignominious slavery, of Europe’s failure to help her, and of Britain’s overweening pride”²¹¹. The pragmatic unity of

²⁰⁵ *ibid*

²⁰⁶ St. Clair: 1998, pp.334

²⁰⁷ Hamilakis: 2007, pp.266-268

²⁰⁸ St. Clair: 1998, pp.335

²⁰⁹ Whelan & Moore: 2006, pp.118

²¹⁰ Whelan & Moore: 2006, pp.114

²¹¹ St. Clair: 1998, pp.184.

past situations and present life (classical Greece and Britain) through monuments and artifacts gives them a status of honor. King rebukes the argument that the British Museum is attached to the Elgin marbles as a reminder of the empire's glorious colonial past. She claims that this is the pot calling the kettle black considering the Parthenon is made to represent Athens' past when it "subjugated fellow Greeks, slaughtered and crucified those who objected"²¹². King goes on to say that since the modern Greeks do not share the same culture or religion as the Classical Greeks only the geography, this limits their claim that the restitution of the Marbles would permit better contextual understanding²¹³. Paradoxically, King also expresses contempt at the fact that the Greeks are reclaiming objects sold by "their ancestors" (the Turks?)²¹⁴. Lynn Meskell argues against the concept that since contemporary cultures are divorced from their ancient culture and religion this gives colonialist countries the right to plunder the historical treasures of their colonies²¹⁵.

In regard to archeological research and museums, an alternative to isolated nationalism and colonialist paradigms was offered by Vitelli & Colwell-Chanthaphonh, who suggest to place the emphasis on international collaborative research, which does not place any particular privilege to any one culture alone²¹⁶. In this way all cultures would be respected equally. Instead of presenting history as fact, they suggest presenting narratives of the culture in a

²¹² King: 2006, pp.302

²¹³ King: 2006, pp.308

²¹⁴ King: 2006, pp.308.

²¹⁵ Cantwell, Friedlander & Tramm: 2000, pp.149-151

²¹⁶ Vitelli & Colwell-Chanthaphonh: 2006, pp187

way that expresses their views of the world and how they wish to be seen as members of humanity. Vitelli & Colwell-Chanthaphonh explain that cultural tolerance and respect amongst archeologists and nations will require “that we lower the banner of objective science, under which archeologists have felt justified in profaning the most cherished and sacred aspects of others’ pasts”²¹⁷. Most academics would agree that nationalistic ideologies and Western interpretations are both as biased in their own ways and that a form of accommodation must be sought.

4.3 An Epistemological Look at the Basic British and Greek Arguments Pandora's Box: Emotionally Volatile Western Logic

Following this independent look at the scholarly arguments for and against the return of the Parthenon Marbles, a reoccurring theme prevails which placed in question the validity of the Greek arguments by the British. Merryman, amongst others scholars suggests that the Greek arguments for the return of the Marbles are emotional and not logical therefore, less valid²¹⁸. Although I took care to distance myself, and my opinions, when presenting this literature review, I feel it necessary at this point to argue for the validity of both the British and the Greek arguments regardless of their emotive presentation.

Behind every action there is emotion. All human beings have a temperament, which at its most basic level is the interpretation and expression of emotions through actions. In the West, a composed temperament is expected of political representatives and most public servants. Classen and Howes

²¹⁷ Vitelli & Colwell-Chanthaphonh: 2006, pp.189.

²¹⁸ Merryman: 2000, pp.39

eloquently describe historical European mentality dating back to the nineteenth century:

Europeans perceived themselves to be the rational, civilized, elite among the peoples of the world. As reason and sensuality were traditionally opposed in Western thought, non-Westerners were, by contrast, imagined to be irrational and sensuous.²¹⁹

In fact, to display emotion or to react passionately is often associated with weakness of character and immaturity. Moreover, it is understood in Western countries that children must be taught to be self-possessed and that emotional outbursts are essentially infantile. Not only is emotion seen negatively, it is said to affect rational capacities in a negative manner. This perspective is epistemologically erroneous, and at its core quite ethnocentric.

Merryman suggest in his book "Thinking about The Elgin Marbles" that Greek arguments for the return of the Parthenon Marbles are intended to "appeal primarily to the emotions" and in doing so these public, emotional statements "divert attention from the facts and discourage reasoned discussion of the issues"²²⁰. He claims that these powerful passionate Greek statements are clever distractions from logic and that actions (such as the return of the Marbles) cannot be based on emotion alone. Merryman assumes that emotion based on past actions clouds judgment and obstructs logical action, I propose the opposite; past actions create emotional responses, which in turn create logical actions. As John Gardner, Professor of Jurisprudence at the University of Oxford states:

[T]here is no general or default answer to the question of whether a sober

²¹⁹ Classen & Howes: 2005, pp.206

²²⁰ Merryman: 2000, pp.39

appreciation of reasons for action is more reasonable than an emotionally-charged appreciation of those same reasons for action. Being cool, calm, and collected is just another place on the emotional map, with no special claim to rational efficiency²²¹.

Anthropologists and sociologists have for decades been at the forefront of human sciences in regards to reflexivity. We have realize that simply because we study people or circumstances that does not mean that we are immune to these circumstances ourselves. Accordingly, as a modern Anthropologist, I have found that the antiquated Western notion of objective logic has poisoned many disciplines' understanding of the role played by human subjective biases and emotional reactions in human reasoning during political and legal debates concerning international cultural property.

Legal institutions are intended to deal with the powerful emotional conflicts in society, ironically, by removing emotional elements from the public forum. Law is supposed to be completely rational; individuals within this system make decisions as though they themselves were emotionally unaffected and objective. By completely ignoring or suppressing emotional reactions in this way we fail to take the time to analyze and incorporate our emotional background reasons from the subsequent actions. The action is never analyzed on emotional terms. In fact, it has been argued that expressing potent emotions as opposed to suppressing them helps attenuate the perpetuation of these overwhelming emotions during action²²². Even Tamis & Gavaki claim that Montreal-Greeks have moved beyond

²²¹ Gardner: 2009, p.326

²²² Gardner: 2009, pp.319

their emotionality and subscribe to a more logical form of decision-making²²³. The emotionally repressive learnt temperament is deeply deceiving as it has led to the notion that by excluding emotional language we eliminate the effect of emotions on our decisions, which is impossible. Take for example this deliciously misguided quote from a classic American textbook by Robert H. Thouless called “How to Think Straight”:

When we catch ourselves thinking in emotional phraseology, let us form a habit of translating our thoughts into emotionally neutral words. So we can guard ourselves from ever being so enslaved by emotional words and phrases that they prevent us from thinking objectively when we need to do so—that is, whenever we have to come to a decision on any debatable matter²²⁴.

Returning to the specific case at hand: I propose that the Trustees of the British Museum are dogmatically associating their subjective beliefs for the retention of the Marbles with the concept of objective certainty. By suppressing their emotional attachment to these sculptures they are blinded to the notion that their beliefs in the Universal Museum and ‘scientific archeology’²²⁵ are in essence emotional reasons for their political action, which they have instinctively camouflaged under a veil of so-called logic. Although the British museum's arguments are said to be based on logic they are, in fact, belief based in the same way the Greek governments' arguments are, the only difference is the transparency of emotion of those public displays. The Greeks have a long history of emotional expression, in oratory, poetry and mourning to mention only a few,

²²³ Tamis & Gavaki: 2002, pp. 257

²²⁴ Thouless, 1932, pp.19

²²⁵ Vitelli & Colwell-Chanthaphonh: 2006, pp.186

yet historically their ancestors are widely seen as the fathers of Western thought and the architects of epistemological questioning. British public servants on the other hand, seem to practice selective forms of "logical" reasoning as described by Thouless:

Emotional thinking (like most other kinds of crooked thinking we shall be studying) is as common as a weed. It is to be found in the leading articles of newspapers, in the words of people carrying on discussions on political, religious, or moral questions, and the speeches made by public men when these deal with controversial matters...When we condemn such a use of emotional words in writings and speeches, we must remember that this is a symptom of a more deep-seated evil-their prevalence in our own private, unexpressed thinking. Many of our highly colored political speakers whose speeches stir us as we are stirred by romantic poetry show themselves unable to think calmly and objectively on any subject. They have so accustomed themselves to think in emotionally toned words that they can no longer think any other way. They should have been poets or professional orators, but certainly not statesmen.²²⁶

Merryman states that Greek arguments for the retention of cultural heritage monuments are modern Byronism; he disagrees with the notion that "they belong in the national territory"²²⁷. He argues that these forms of arguments when analyzed "logically" appear more "like statements of faith" rather than statements of "reason"²²⁸. As previously mentioned, Gardner indicates that emotions are in part composed of beliefs and that these beliefs "answer to epistemic reasons" (2009, p. 327). Merryman's comments are prime examples of a form of patronizing which is in essence quite hypocritical and may date back to the heyday of British imperialism. By hiding behind a fictive amour of "logic" and "objectivity" he has completely sidestepped the issue of sentiment felt by the

²²⁶ Thouless:1932, pp.17 &18-19

²²⁷ Merryman: 2000, pp. 139

²²⁸ ibid

British at the possibility of losing one of their prime cultural possessions, the Parthenon Marbles, while simultaneously diminishing the Greek government's arguments for the restitution of the marbles due to their emotional displays. He explains how the Parthenon Marbles "could easily be made to be... accessible to the Greeks through reproductions" at which point he explains that "There must be some cultural magic inherent in the authentic object, and not in an accurate reproduction, that speaks only to Greeks, or the argument fails"²²⁹. The logic of this statement is rather unidirectional, if Merryman believes that there is no significant value to owning the original Parthenon Marbles, why is he not a proponent for the return of the Marbles to Greece and the replacement of the Elgin exhibit in London with replicas? Why then is the British Museum so adamant on retaining the originals? Once Merryman's arguments are observed through an emotionally transparent perspective, as opposed to an artificially and handicapping logical view, one realizes that this debate is one of love and pride and not of laws and politics.

²²⁹ Merryman: 2000, pp.54

Chapter Five: Collaborators

After having developed an in-depth literature review on the subject of the case for the restitution of the Parthenon Marbles, I was anxious to test my field site in order to establish Montreal-Greek immigrants' opinions and attitudes vis-à-vis this international debate. Moreover, I questioned whether second and third generation Greek immigrants would be informed on the situation of the Parthenon Marbles owing to their geographic separation. I assumed I would find that as the level of assimilation into Canadian culture increased, both awareness and fervor for the return of Marbles would decrease. I was only partially correct: as it turns out, awareness of the case for the restitution of the Parthenon Marbles amongst Montreal-Greek immigrants seems to be limited to individuals who have been educated in cultural, historical or political field, regardless of whether they are first, second or third generation immigrants. Moreover, amongst individuals who have been educated in the above-mentioned domains there is significant heterogeneity of attitudes. And finally, once second and third generation immigrants are made aware of case for the restitution of the Parthenon Marbles, there is significant passion that sparks social mobilization.

5.1 Collaborator and Friend: A rose by any other name

A single rose can be my garden... a single friend, my world. ~Leo Buscaglia

When I first began my fieldwork, I was aware of the classic anthropological dilemma of subjective cultural interpretation (and sometimes misrepresentation) of collaborator statements and actions stemming from an

inevitable disassociation between collaborators and researcher who is, more often than not, an outsider looking in. Having conducted fieldwork for previous university assignments, I was used to a form of "hit and run" anthropology in which an interview is conducted, a transcript is sent to the interviewee for approval, the anthropologist leaves the field site followed by the distribution to all participants of the final academic product (which more often than not was never read) at which point all participant/researcher communication is terminated. In order to avoid this imperfect methodology, I intended to subscribe to a more modern form of anthropological fieldwork that promotes a back- and-forth or 'give-and-take' interview environment by permitting (even insisting) that my collaborators feel free to ask me any questions that they might have at any time during the interview. I interviewed them, and in many cases they interviewed me back. This openness to personal exposure as an individual rather than a professional scholar diminished the formality of the ethnographer/collaborator relationship and ignited an enduring friendship and professional partnership.

One of the most wonderful consequences of my 'give-and-take' fieldwork was the personal growth of my self-confidence and willingness to approach individuals without fear of rejection. In an academic environment I feel free to express my opinions whereas in a public sphere I have always been rather reserved. By bringing my research to "the outside world" I simultaneously merged my academic confidence with my social shyness to comprise a more well rounded individual who, as my friends tell me, is more interested in getting to

know my collaborators and what is important to them than in proving a pre-stated point. One of my collaborators, who I now consider a friend, sent me a Christmas email describing her experiences with me through my research:

Orcus- "I thought you would be asking questions from a list and checking stuff off and trying to catch me in contradictions... when I first met you in the conference room I thought you were waiting for the interviewer too and that you were just making small talk... I liked you instantly... even once you explained to me that you were the anthropologist... our conversations never felt forced, I always thought you actually cared and were interested in my life... I always felt as though I took something away from our meetings too. Just like you explained, "back and forth questions" ... made everything much more relaxed and almost like a couple of girls gossiping :-)"

5.2 Collaborators' Background

The following charts are summaries of my main collaborators' ages as well as their cultural and educational backgrounds²³⁰. These individuals were the main influencers of this thesis, they were all interviewed a minimum of two times (including focus groups). There were multiple ongoing informal interviews with Libera, Phobus, Pythoness and Orcus since we have developed friendships, which go beyond this thesis. There were approximately six other participants in this thesis; they are not included in the following charts due to their limited involvement in this project. In most cases, the individuals not included in the following list felt more comfortable listening during group discussions rather than participating. This is not to say they did not affirm other collaborators' opinions, however, they played secondary roles. Although I must admit to having spent more time with my friends than my secondary collaborators, it was essential to

²³⁰ Please note that all participants' names have been changed to those of Greek mythological creatures in order to guarantee anonymity.

the validity of my research not to permit my friends' opinions to weigh more heavily on my final conclusions. I believe I have succeeded in balancing out the opinions of all my collaborators, no matter their personal relation to myself. In order to best illustrate what I consider to be “secondary collaborators” I have decided to include the following field-notes from an interview, which I consider to be rather humorous and sadly somewhat fruitless.

5.3 An interview gone terribly wrong: The writer

On a warm July morning, I sat on the terrace of a downtown coffee shop sipping a Chai tea staring at the people passing in the street, hoping that one of them was the woman I was intending to meet. For over two weeks I had been emailing back and forth with a Greek writer who had recently published a book on Greek Culture meant for grade five students attending the Greek/French Immersion Montreal Private Grade Schools. When I finally notice her walking up to the coffee shop, I am taken aback by her long, wavy, waist length, thick black hair and her flowing beige dress: she looks just like the classical Greek women painted on ancient Amphora. She smiles, gives me a heartfelt hug and offers to buy me a slice of pie to go with my Chai tea. As she goes off to buy a pastry I prepare my interview questions and my digital recorder unaware as yet of the direction this interview would take. As she sits down she takes a good long hard look at me and says, “ I’m so glad that you’re interested in helping me sell my book!”

Obviously some wires must have gotten crossed; apparently this collaborator thought our meeting was about negotiating my commission percentage for the sale of her book. After I explained that my reasons for getting in touch with her were of an academic purpose as opposed to a profit-seeking endeavor she began to shut down. She did not understand why I would have any interest in learning about Greek culture without financially profiting from it in some way. After twenty minutes of pleading with her to do my interview she finally agreed to a non-recorded run-through of her experiences while writing her book. I asked her about her selection of images which accompanied her historical analysis of the Greek nation and she replied that she picked images off the internet that she could publish freely without much thought for which artifact went where in her book. She explained that her goal was to capture the attention of the children with “pretty images” that would make them “proud to be Greek”. When I asked her if she knew a little bit about the sculptures she had selected she sighed and said it was “unimportant”. This interview deteriorated further when I pointed out that many of the images she had selected were in fact Italian sculptures. She tired rather quickly of me after that. As we parted ways she offered to sell me her book at cost. Unfortunately I had spent my last five dollars on Chai tea... Although this interview went rather badly, it did help solidify my suspicions that Greek cultural recognition was of central importance to Greek immigrants in Montreal rather than the specificities of the artworks themselves (such as the case for the restitution of the Parthenon marbles).

5.4 Main Collaborators

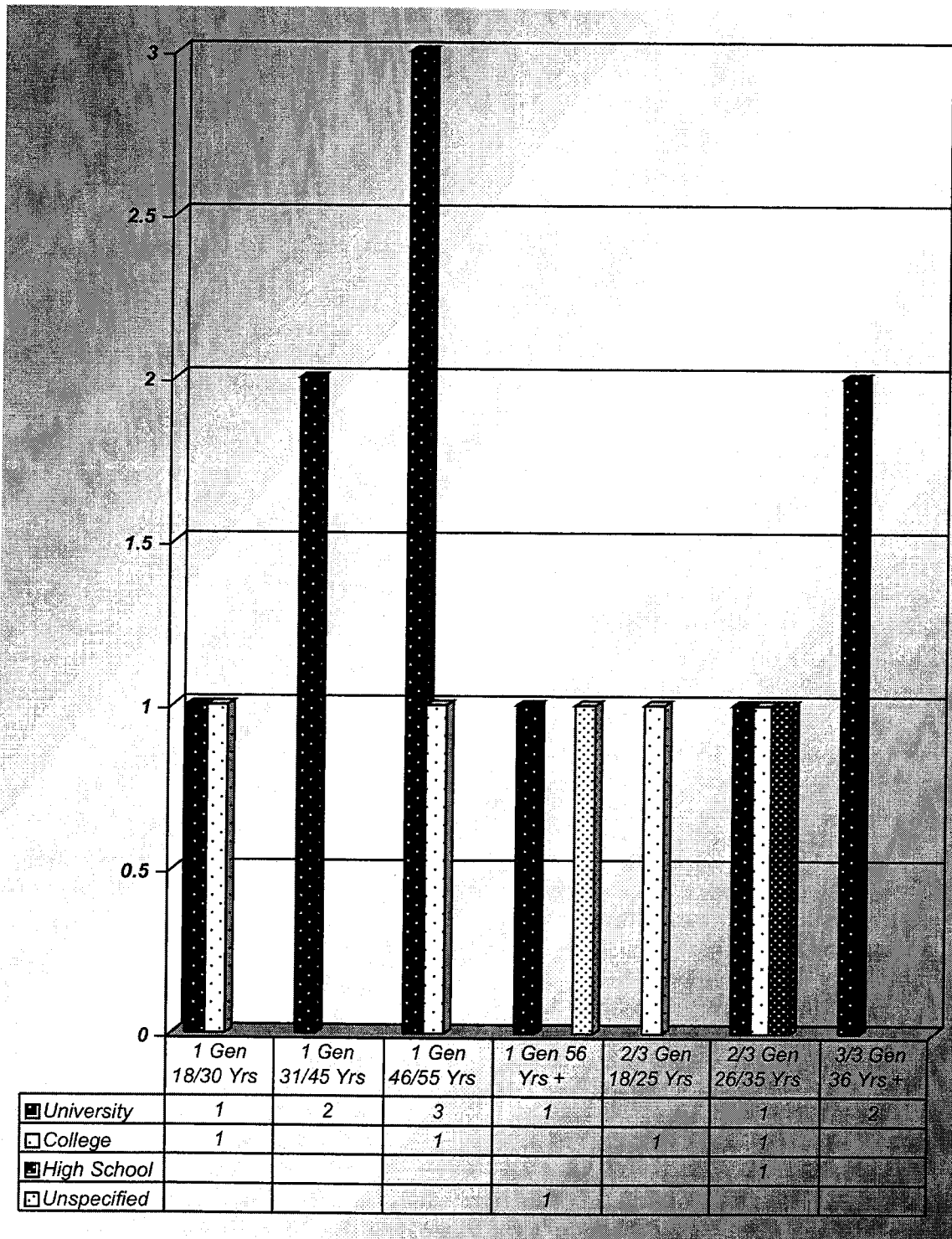
The following are two charts and a graph outlining by main collaborators as well as their backgrounds, relations to one another, and the methods I used to contact them.

<u>Collaborators</u>	
First Generation Greek Immigrant	
Castalia	Born in Greece. Works in Montreal as a sociology professor. In her fifties. Previous acquaintance.
Minerva	Born in Greece, member and administrative head of the Hellenic Society. He is a man in his sixties, with some university education. Contacted through an acquaintance.
Uranus	Born in Greece, moved to Montreal to study in the communications field, has some university education. He is in his late forties. Contacted through an acquaintance.
Pythoness	Born of mix parentage, Greek mother and Archeologist Canadian Father, at the age of 8 her parents divorced, her father remained in Greece while her Greek mother immigrated to Canada (Montreal) with her children. Pythoness was 26 at the time of our interviews having just graduated with a Bachelor's degree in Classical studies from Concordia University. She is a previous acquaintance.
Pallas	Mother of Pythoness. She holds a higher education certificate; she is between the ages of 50 and 55. She was contacted through Pythoness.
Percephone	Born in Thebes, moved to Montreal as an adult (age unknown). He has some university education. He is in his late fifties. Contacted through his son Phoebus.

<p>Pythonic</p>	<p>Born in Egypt (Alexandria), immigrated to Greece with his parents at the age of 3. He considers himself Greek and not Egyptian. He obtained a Bachelor's degree in Greece, immigrated shortly after graduating to Canada (Montreal) to pursue his education in Microbiology at the graduate level at McGill University. He was 35 at our first meeting. This collaborator was found using online social networks and via emails. His girlfriend participated in a focus group; I did not include her as one of my main collaborators since that was the only time she participated in this research.</p>
<p>Orcus</p>	<p>Born in Greece to an educated Greek mother and a German father, moved to Montreal before the age of one. She was a 21 years old student at Dawson College in interior design when interviewed. Her parents divorced shortly after moving to Canada, her mother is presently involved in the administration of a Greek restaurant in Montreal whereas her father lives in the United States. She was contacted through her mother who is a previous acquaintance.</p>
<p>Python</p>	<p>Born in Crete, lived in Athens until the age of 12. At that point he immigrated with his older sister and parents to Canada. He was 36 at the time of the interview. He had recently graduate with a Master's degree in Theology from the University of Montreal. He was contacted through an online social networking site.</p>
<p>Thalassa</p>	<p>Born in Greece. Immigrated to Canada with her husband (who has since passed away). Was well into her seventies when we met. Has unspecified education. She is the mother of Nyx.</p>

Second and Third Generation Greek Immigrant	
Libera	Born in Montreal to Greek immigrant parents. She has some college education and a certificate in Yoga instruction. She was 32 at the time of my fieldwork. She was contacted through a mutual friend.
Thanatos	Born in Montreal to Greek immigrant parents. He was 24 during our first meeting. He is a nurse having completed a DEP at Dawson University. He was one of the administrators of a social networking website dedicated to Montreal Greeks.
Ourea	Born in Montreal to second generation Greek immigrant parents. Her grandmother moved back to Crete after having lived in Montreal to raise her children. Ourea is in her early thirties and works as a receptionist for a medical clinic. We met through a mutual friend.
Tethys	Born in Montreal to a Greek mother and second-generation Greek immigrant father. Travels to Greece every year to visit family. He is deeply involved in Canadian politics. He served as a gatekeeper to other culturally involved Greek individuals. He is university educated and was in his late thirties when we met. We met through an online social networking site.
Phoebus	Born in Greece to educated Greek parents, immigrated at the age of 2 with his parents to Canada (Montreal). He is presently an undergraduate student at Concordia University in Sociology. He is a previous acquaintance. (Although he is technically a first generation immigrant he considers himself Canadian born, therefore I have opted to include him as a second-generation immigrant).
Nyx	Born in Montreal to Greek immigrant parents, she is the daughter of Thalassa. She is in her early fifties. Nyx is university educated and works in marketing. She was contacted through a mutual online acquaintance.

Main Collaborators: Table of Age and Educational Backgrounds



Chapter 6: Deconstructing Research Methods

In order to conduct an exploratory research aimed at discovering whether or not the case for the return of the Parthenon Marbles is of importance to Montreal-Greek immigrants, I participated in a series of consecutive one-on-one in-depth interviews and focus groups with first, second and third generation Greek Immigrants living in Montreal. These individuals were contacted through professional connections, mutual acquaintances and via Internet social groups.

The initial interviews were conducted in my own university, amongst colleagues and fellow students, who in turn referred me to the Montreal Hellenic Society and other Greek community organizations where I conducted interviews with cultural leaders. All of these individuals knew about the “Elgin” Marbles and were more than happy to let their opinions be known. However, I very quickly realized that I was tainting my research by remaining within the comfortable niche of academia and scholars who specialize in Hellenic culture. I began communicating with individuals on two different Internet social networking sites dedicated to Greek culture in Montreal. When I met up with individuals from these groups I noted that although they were deeply involved with Greek community life and festive events in Montreal, they were more often than not unaware of the situation with the Parthenon Marbles. Moreover, Individuals I contacted randomly through friends and acquaintances who were not members of online cultural groups, cultural community organizations or cultural research departments of universities knew virtually nothing on the case for the restitution of the Parthenon

Marbles. Since virtually none of my collaborators knew what I was speaking of when I asked them about the Parthenon Marbles, I was forced to make some major modification to both my approach during interviews and the research methods I had intended to employ. In the following section I analyze my research methods, which include the interview questionnaire, a museum outing focus group, participant observation during Hellenic celebrations, and the use of a photographic portfolio.

6.1 The Interview Questionnaire: Cultural representation

6.1.1 The Interview Questionnaire

Ancient Greek Artifacts

Please Rank These Statements In Order Of Importance

Most important-----Least important

#1-----#2-----#3-----#4

_____ -Preservation: ensuring the safe conservation of art and monuments from damaging elements

_____ -Integrity: keeping monuments in their original state and location

_____ -Nationalism: promoting the symbolism associated with historical pieces in order to fortify cultural, traditional and/or political identities

_____ -Access: making pieces available to be experienced by as many people as possible

6.1.2 Uranus

As previously mentioned, most of my collaborators knew very little on the subject of the Parthenon Marbles, therefore, I took it upon myself to teach them about the arguments for and against the restitution of the Parthenon Marbles.

Consequently, they were all asked to rank the level of importance of the

arguments in favor of preservation, integrity, nationalism and access in regards to ancient Greek artifacts (see questionnaire in section 6.1.1). Half of my collaborators filled the form in a routine manner as though they were filling out a Magazine Quiz, resulting in less than reliable data. The other half refused to fill it out or did so reluctantly, attributing their dislike of this form to hesitation and ignorance in this matter. I used the questionnaire five times. The last time I used the questionnaire was when I interviewed Uranus for the first time; not only did he refuse to answer the questionnaire, but he explained how wrong it was to rank these arguments. He vocalized what I am sure many of the other participants may have been feeling without being able to express it. The following is a transcribed segment of the first interview conducted with Uranus:

Uranus- So you want me to rate these?

Jenny- Yes, in order of importance, '1' is the most impor...

Uranus- I can't!

Jenny-Okay, you don't have to, I...

Uranus- No, it's not that I don't want to... I want to help you out but, this doesn't work.

Jenny- Okay, why not?

Uranus- Can I use the same number for all my answers?

Jenny- Sure, why not. Can you explain why you want to give them all the same number? What number are you writing down?

Uranus- '1'

Jenny-You are putting '1' in all the spaces?

Uranus- Yes, you can't ask me which one is more important... they are all connected, they are all important, in different ways. It's like... I don't know... asking someone to choose between their children's needs. You can't feed a baby but leave her outside in the cold... you can't... ask me to choose between... well... any needs that a person has work together, you can't rate these sorts of things. You can't rate a person's love for their child...

Until then, I had been unaware of how slanted my view of the Elgin restitution case was. I had set out with the goal of quantitatively evaluating Greek immigrant emotional attitudes to the Elgin Marbles, which is, I realize now a counterproductive method. One cannot quantify attitudes. Although I have been told time and time again how all-institutional knowledge is contained within a specific paradigm, I always believed I could see outside the system; I thought I existed in a way which permitted me to remain 'neutral' not taking sides in this particular political matter. It is now apparent to me that the only way in which an individual can access his/her acquired knowledge on an epistemological level is through the assistance of individuals existing in a slightly different system.

Several individuals sitting in chairs forming a circle around a sculpture each observe the same object from different angles. I am one of these individuals; I sit facing a work of art (the Greek Culture), unable to rise from my own cultural chair. I can only see this culture from one angle. Even though I may suspect that there is more to see of this work of art, the only way for me to experience this truth is to speak to the person sitting next to me, who can see some of what I see, and a little beyond. Uranus has lived in Montreal for nearly two decades, yet he is also a Greek immigrant; therefore he was capable of

translating for me where my outsider perspective has obstructed my understanding of Greek Immigrant reality. As Bourdieu explains:

Science is a social field of forces, struggles, and relationships that is defined at every moment by the relations of power among the protagonists. Scientific choices are guided by taken-for-granted assumptions, interactive with practices, as to what constitutes real and important problems, valid methods, and authentic knowledge .

The questionnaire I had constructed was intended to categorize and prioritize arguments on a scale of importance for Greek immigrants. This was nonsensical since first of all, I was introducing them to the subject in the first place, and second, as Uranus put it, these 'needs' are all interrelated and cannot be separated from one another. By creating this questionnaire, I had unknowingly fallen into the very trap I was trying to expose: the western notion that scientific logic is superior to emotionality. As Johannes Fabian once explained, culture serves anthropology as a form of "organizing principle" whose "common mission is to create order...[which] demands chaos, disorder, confusion as its *raison d'être*". It was shocking to see how Eurocentric my research methods were without me even realizing it. . I discarded this survey's results, save Uranus', given that my research took a new focus: instead of quantifying the importance of restitution arguments, I set out to note whether the case for the restitution of the Parthenon Marbles itself is of importance to Montreal-Greeks.

6.2 Participant Observation: The Flame Festival



The Hellenic Community of Montreal holds "The Hellenic Flame" festival every summer in Montreal. This event is intended to host Hellenic cultural activities in order to promote the Greek culture in Montreal. The organizers usually prepare a multitude of traditional Greek music, dance troop performances and kiosk showcasing Greek businesses, Associations, Artists and cuisine.

6.2.1 Attempt Number One

My first attempt at participant observation during the Flame festival was foiled by rain. The festivities were supposed to take place on Isle Jean Drapeau on one of the rainiest weekends of the summer. Motivated by my need to document this cultural event, I decided to make the journey regardless of the weather. As I walked up hill from the subway station to the wooded area where the festivities were being held I realized that the entire area was covered in ankle deep, slippery, smelly mud. Nonetheless, people were dancing, drinking, eating and (although limited in number) the individuals there were having a good time. The bands were playing and the professional dance troops were dancing but all I

could think about was how wet my feet were and how much I detested mosquitoes.

Since the festival began after dark and it was situated in an area of Montreal I was unaccustomed to, my husband was kind enough to accompany me. As he purchased a cup of coffee from the food stand I scanned the mud pit for any form of Greek archeological imagery. I found rows of kiosks selling a dazzling array of religious pendants, LED light gizmos, flags, jewelry, modern art, Canadian and Quebecois memorabilia but no ancient art images or symbols. After twenty minutes and a few hundred mosquito bites we decided that I had lost enough blood to anthropology for that night. We left disheartened; maybe I was wrong to think that the Parthenon Marbles are important to immigrant Greeks in Montreal?

6.2.2 Attempt Number Two

A few weeks later, the second portion of the Flame festivities was under way. As I walked up to the barricades laid out across St-Roch Street containing the



street festival I began to question my reasons for being here. What was I expecting to find the second time around? Would this be a waste of time again? Already the narrow 3-block area was packed with a variety of individuals from various cultural backgrounds partaking in the roast pork, pastries and cheap beer. As I dodged and weaved through the crowds seeking out my main

collaborator, who had offered to serve as a tour guide throughout this excursion, a drunken woman began a sneezing fit that resulted in her four-dollar beer spraying across the front of my brown summer dress. I was now angry, feeling claustrophobic, wet, embarrassed and ready to leave. These Flame festivals and I were not getting along very well so far. Somehow, I pulled myself together, located my collaborator and even went so far as to make a joke about the wet t-shirt contest he had just missed. I felt completely out of my element; not only was the entire situation aggravating me, but my collaborator's friends were nowhere to be found and the long lasting awkward silences between us were only somewhat amended by the sounds of recorded traditional Greek Music blaring through poor quality speakers twenty feet from us. The smallest glimpse of hope emerged when I offered to buy him another beer. As I waited in line with 50 other people to obtain his watered-down beverage, I realized that the entire row of Greek restaurants, which I had ignored out of habit, had images of ancient Greek artifacts on their banners next to their simple yet traditional menus.

How did I miss that before getting in line? One of the major obstacles to conducting ethnographic research at home is the blasé attitude of researchers towards things that might be relevant to their project. These things are often more obvious to individuals out of their element. It is funny to think that even though I believed myself out of my comfort zone I was still habitually urbanite enough to completely overlook the things I was searching for that were on the faces of the half dozen restaurants lining St-Roch Street. Moreover, I believe that when

looking for something it will elude you and when you let your guard down the obvious then hits you; in this case a five-foot tall image of The Tyrannicides Marbles.

Since we had a few minutes to kill, I decided to attempt an impromptu interview with my collaborator over the blaring music. I asked him why he believed the Souvlaki restaurant owner selected such an image for his banner. He laughed and said:

Tathys: "Jenny not everything means something... he probably chose that picture because he liked how it looked..."

This answer made me feel silly and a little hurt that he wasn't taking me seriously. I believe he detected my disappointment because after a few uncomfortable moments of silence he continued.

Tethys: "I guess maybe it's because people have an idea of what it means to be Greek and he obviously is keeping that in mind when he picked that image..."

Me: "So you think he chose that for the non-Greek customers who expect to see that sort of thing on the banner of a Greek restaurant?"

Tethys: "Yeah... Greeks born in Montreal have those same sorts of ideas too you know... they only know what the TV and their parents' tell them is Greek. So these sorts of images are...I guess... the lowest common denominator... sort of... although that sounds bad... I mean, you know, I like the picture too. But I really don't know why he picked that one exactly, why don't you ask him?"

Me: "So do you recognize those sculptures from your time in Greece?"

Tethys: “No way... [like I said last time we talked]...there are so many of those things lying around falling apart everywhere in Greece who cares in the end. Why is this one better than another one? This one (pointing to the image) is nice, I mean... unless you actually study this sort of stuff it’s really just a pretty picture that everyone knows is Greek and is supposed to make us feel good to be related to the guys who did this”.

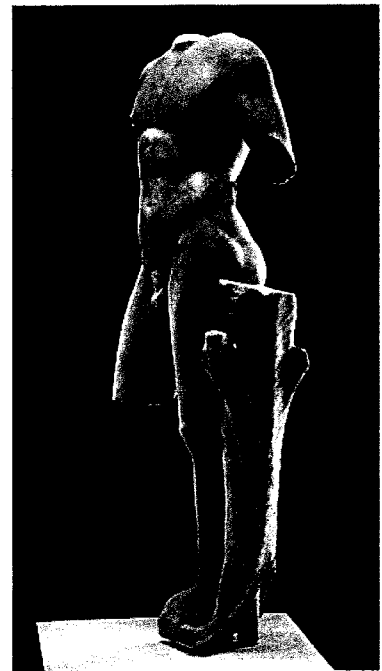
Although little else was accomplished that day (try asking a restaurateur why he selected that image to represent his business when he has 50 hungry people waiting in line...) I realized that you never know what you are looking for. Although this imagery was not of the Parthenon, it was still encouraging to see that Greek businesses recognized the importance of the symbolism inherent in pictures of classical Greek monuments and sculptures. Maybe I would have been better off simply enjoying the festivities as a Participant rather than stress myself out as an Anthropologist attempting to do her job.

6.3 Evolution of the focus group: The Museum Outing

After having established that the Parthenon Marbles were not well known to most of my collaborators, I decided to test the theory that this ignorance was mostly due to physical separation between Montreal-Greeks and the Parthenon Marbles and the Acropolis. In order to best understand how Montreal Greeks’ sentiments in regards to the cultural property restitution case of the Parthenon Marbles was affected by the proximity of and access to the national symbols in question, a focus group was taken on a museum outing. The goal of this trip to

the Museum of Fine Arts' Ancient Mediterranean Art section was to help the candidates reconnect with ancient Greek art and history and thus make the ensuing focus group questions directly pertinent to their lived experiences. Although I realize that the Parthenon is a national symbol whereas most of the archeological pieces in the Montreal Museum of Fine Arts are significantly less important, I still felt as though conducting a museum outing might stimulate conversation, which would eventually lead to the discussion of the Parthenon Marbles. During the outing I undertook a two part role , firstly I was a tour guide who helped these particular individuals understand the history of ancient Greek artifacts and secondly, I was a discussion chair during the focus group conducted at a café/bar near the museum.

The group was composed of four Greek and Egyptian members of a Montreal Hellenic community website. The individuals who comprised the group included Pythonic and his girlfriend (she is of Egyptian decent, Montreal born, in her thirties), as well as Thanatos and Libera. The group took particular interest in the Egyptian Sarcophagus and the Roman Chigi Apollo, which is a Marble statue of an athletes' body found on the Greek island of Paros. I explained to the group that many Roman marbles were in fact replicas of Greek bronze Sculptures, which were



often melted down during times of war to provide Metals to make armory and shields. Pythonis and his girlfriend did not find the collection of Greek pottery overly interesting whereas Libera found the series of marble heads (some Roman, others Greek) charming. Thanatos disappeared for about half an hour to go visit the Pre-Columbian section. Overall, the trip was very effective at sparking conversation. Over coffee I asked the group to discuss which pieces they liked best in the exposition, overall the Chigi Apollo was greatly enjoyed. After about 45 minutes I attempted to rein in the conversation by asking the following question:

How would you feel if the Montreal Museum of Fine Arts had to return Chigi Apollo to Greece? Would it sadden you to lose proximity to your favorite piece of Greek heritage even though it would be returned to its homeland?

The responses varied greatly, the Egyptian members of the group agreed that they would feel this to be a loss due to the fact that they enjoyed the day's outing and intended to return to the museum. These individuals preferred to have access to the piece rather than see it return home. Libera expressed mixed feelings. She explained that in the circumstances of a piece being taken illegally from its place or origin he believed it should return based on the principle of cultural property theft. Nonetheless she was also very impressed with the manner in which the museum displayed the statue and would not like to see a vacant place where it once stood. I explained that certain museums in the United States were in the process of returning cultural property to First Nations' People and had

opted to leave the empty display cases in the exposition with a record explaining why and to whom they had returned the artifact. These empty cases had become symbols of good will and inter-cultural collaboration through cultural property restitution. The idea of going to a museum to see empty cases did not appeal to many of the focus group participants.

Thanatos believed very strongly that the piece should remain at the MMFA in order to make Greek art accessible to students in Montreal: “seeing the original piece that ancient people worked on with their very hands is absolutely special, you can’t understand how wonderful and important the statue is from a picture or even a plastic copy in a gift shop”. I probed the issue further by reiterating that this piece is most likely a Roman replica of a Greek bronze and not, as he put it “the original”. This started a conversation about Roman conquest of Greece and how art theft has always been part of Greek history. As one collaborator put it: “...from Romans to French to English to Turks... you think art theft would be more part of our history than art preservation!” As I pressured this issue further a debate sparked around the issue of international access to Greek exhibitions versus the need to return objects that were taken out of Greece during times of occupation.

One individual explained that artifacts should not be returned because “there are so many of those things in Greece they [Greek government] should be glad that museums are taking care of the ones they’ve got”. Contrary to this position, Pythonic agreed that Ex-Colonial powers such as Britain use their

political and international power to push forth their arguments in regards to cultural property rights:

“museums all over the world have art from Greece and Egypt that was smuggled out of the countries illegally but they are now displayed in the museums, it’s like they are mocking third world countries... come and get it if you can”.

I continued this brainstorming session with the following hypothetical situation:

What if tomorrow, the British Government, for whatever reason, agrees to return the Elgins to Greece to be exposed in the Acropolis Museum, how would you feel about it, and how would that affect your lives here in Montreal?

For the first time since we sat down to have a cup of coffee together, all the participants agreed on one answer: this scenario is impossible because the British have too much international power to be forced to cede the Elgins to Greece. The issues of tourism, cultural capital and international prestige were bounced back and forth as reasons why this remains an impossibility. Why then, I asked, are there so many individuals and institutions both in Greece and in England pressuring the British government to return the Elgins? One collaborator explained that it was the “principle of the matter” which inspired people to fight for the return of these pieces, the pieces in themselves, or whether they would ever be returned was less important than the message that would be sent to all ex-colonial powers regarding the intellectual and cultural independence of ex-colonies. Pythonic’s girlfriend explained it as follows: “...as long as they have the power first world countries can set their own rules, it’s like the kid in the “mine” stage, you know when they start to realize they can bully other kids to get their

toys... they [Greek and Egyptian governments] want their toys back, they are tired of getting bullied around and those pieces are famous so it would really stick it to them [British government]”. These explanations led me to question the unique nature of the case for the return of the Elgins. I asked my group this question:

Why do you think the Greek government wants these marbles restituted when you can see (showing my portfolio) that there are thousands of other Greek marbles displayed in museums throughout the world, which were purchased under less than lawful circumstances?

The general consensus amongst the Greek individuals was based on the fact that these pieces were famous and therefore worth significant financial and cultural capital as opposed to the lesser known items scattered around the world. I could not help but question this answer due to the fact Libera was unaware of the Elgin case until we met for the first time a month prior to this focus group and since then had done some personal research to inform herself about these issues to be prepared for today's discussion. Her answer to this remake was simple:

“of course I didn't know about the Elgins, I'm not like [the other Greek individual] who studies art history at Dawson! I'm a Yoga instructor, this doesn't affect my life at all, I was interested in this after you talk about it [the first interview]... when I said [the Elgins] are famous I meant to people who like that kind of thing...

some people plan their whole vacation around museums... those are the people who know about art.”

Thanatos went on to explain that he did not know of the Elgins until the topic was covered in his classes. Therefore we concluded as a group that the Elgins are popular for a certain elite population, which is aware and/or educated in the realm of ancient art, whereas average Greek individuals might not know (or care) about this issue until it is presented to them.

Pythonic however believed that there was a deeper reason for these particular pieces being the focus of the Greek restitution campaigns. He felt that certain historical items are important because they can educate their people about their past, which in turn creates associations with patriotism and national identity. For one of the Egyptians, the Rosetta Stone was a comparable example of this:

“This is the Stone that taught us how to read and write in ancient Egyptian... it is the key to our past... it plainly tells us who we were and who we are! ...and the British refuse to give it back to us, why do they think they have the right to know us like that?”

Interestingly enough, Thanatos stole the following question from my lips:

“You wouldn’t even have that Stone if the British hadn’t shipped it away and taken care of it, why shouldn’t they get to keep it then?”

To this both the Egyptians took offense and explained that “...those [Egyptian Artifacts] aren’t theirs to show! ...So what you are saying is it doesn’t matter that

it was the Nazis who burnt down the museums, but because they saved some of the paintings that they liked and took care of them they should get to keep them?”

I reminded the group at this point that the British did not originally damage the Parthenon in Greece, it was the Turks who shattered it during the war, and the British did only remove the items following these damages. However, this does not mean that the British did not damage the Parthenon further by dismantling some of the Metopes and Pediments. On this point there seemed to be major differences amongst the participants. On the one hand Thanatos believed that these pieces were special by way of creating cultural and tourism capital. In contrast, Libera felt that the Elgins were no different than any other Greek artifact except for the fact that they are famous enough to use as publicity martyrs to the cause of global post-colonial ex-colonies' independence. The Pythonic and his girlfriend both felt that there was a deeper more emotional attachment to these pieces:

“It's like having someone steal something that you didn't really care that much about in the first place. It hurts your pride and you start creating reasons why this thing means more to you than it does... eventually you believe it and start convincing yourself that you are not yourself without this thing...a part of you is missing... you get mad that someone else has this thing, and you pass this down to your children and they never know better either”.

They also agreed that British tourism would financially suffer if the Elgin Marbles were to be moved back to Greece.

6.4 The Portfolio

Another method I intended to use in an attempt to gather qualitative data from my interviews was a photographic portfolio of ancient Greek artifacts. Originally it was my intent to ask the interviewees to identify the specific pieces held by the British Museum within the portfolio of pictures. My intention for doing this was to try to discern whether my collaborators' knowledge of the Elgins were symbolic (the catalyst of a political struggle) or concrete (archeological pieces). I was testing the Greek government's claim that the Parthenon Marbles are inalienable and therefore cannot be repudiated. In other words: have the Elgin Marbles become political symbols in name rather than visually and/or physically recognizable icons of Greek culture? Would my collaborators be able to recognize the Elgin Marbles visually and not only by name? What is more, if they were indistinguishable from other Greek monuments, is the Greek government's argument for inalienability valid?

The task of identifying the Elgins from the collection of ancient art displayed in the portfolio was for all intents and purposes impossible for any of my collaborators. I might as well have handed out University level art history finals to my collaborators. Only one out of twenty of my collaborators correctly identified two images of the Parthenon Marbles held by the British Museum, and it just so happened that this individual had studied art history and therefore, his knowledge

of the monuments stemmed from his education rather than, from his cultural background. After realizing that the original purpose of the portfolio was futile I instead used it to help collaborators visualize the artistic achievements of the Classical Greek era and the multitude of art pieces that are being held in museums throughout the world. It became invaluable because it helped create an environment of ease in which conversational lulls were spent looking at pictures as opposed to feeling uncomfortable.

I suppose one could say that the portfolio proved a point, the Parthenon Marbles are visually recognizable to Greek immigrants who have studied art history/classics, and unrecognizable to any other Greek immigrants who participated in this project. This is not to say that the Hellenic Diaspora in Montreal has repudiated the Parthenon Marbles, for that there must have been previous knowledge of the Marbles. Instead, I would conclude that the Parthenon Marbles do not affect Greeks in Montreal because they have become separated physically from both the Acropolis and the Marbles. Unless directly involved in either Greek heritage rights or archeology, Greek individuals in Montreal know very little on the Parthenon Marbles, however, once informed about the cultural dispute, they become able to empathize with Greeks fighting for the restitution of the Marbles.

6.4.1 Inalienability of the Marbles

One of the major arguments I sought to test during my fieldwork was the notion of inalienability of the Parthenon Marbles. According to the American Bar,

the term “cultural property” is associated with concepts of personal identity and inalienability²³¹. Inalienability involves the incapacity of repudiating, selling or transferring the cultural object in question. Therefore, regardless of the legality of Lord Elgin’s actions or the purchase of the Marbles by the British Museum, the argument of inalienability requires that the Marbles belong to their originators: the Greeks²³². The rationale behind these claims is that monuments can embody group identity, which belongs to and must be passed down to future generations²³³. The national patrimony projected through these objects reinforces group identity. Hamilakis questions how anyone could ever sell artifacts, which represent a people’s cultural identity and hold such important symbolic capital in the first place²³⁴. Most scholars agree that the debate for the restitution of the marbles is itself representative of the Greek culture. Hamilakis best explains this viewpoint as follows:

The irony embodied in the fact that Elgin’s removal of the sculptures may have deprived the Hellenic nation of part of its invaluable national heritage, but at the same time ... the even greater irony that if the sculptures were to return to Greece, they may lose part of their value... losing at the same time their ability to stand as metaphors for the negotiations of the Hellenic nation and the Greeks overseas²³⁵.

On the other hand, King suggests that the concept of inalienability does not apply to the Parthenon Marbles since even Melina Mercouri (Greek Minister of Culture) who single handedly reinitiated the campaign for the return of the

²³¹ Hutt, Blanco, and Stern: 2004, pp.xi

²³² Barkan& Bush: 2002, pp.31 & 32

²³³ ibid

²³⁴ Hamilakis: 2007, pp.122

²³⁵ Hamilakis: 2007, pp.283-284

Marbles could not herself initially differentiate the Elgins from other Greek sculptures on display in the British Museum²³⁶. Barkan & Bush suggest that cultural property may not be completely inalienable. They explain that when cultural objects are physically separated from their land of origin the association between the native culture's identity and that of the objects may wane while a new associative identity may develop between the host culture and the objects²³⁷.

I propose that the physical distance of Montreal-Greeks from the Hellenic Homeland as well as their cultural adaptation to life in Canada is only partially accountable for their ignorance of the case for the restitution of the Parthenon Marbles. Instead I argue that the fight for the return of the Parthenon Marbles is not of major importance to Greeks who do not work or study in the domain of Heritage and archeology. This is not to say, however that the case for the restitution of the Parthenon Marbles is not critical. Instead, I suggests that even though most Greek immigrants living in Montreal who participated in this research may not have known about the case for the return of the Parthenon Marbles, when asked about their culture, they knew to refer me to cultural leaders who could both answer my questions and protect their cultural identity. Although they themselves may not be fighting for the return of the Marbles, they are confident in their cultural leaders who fight in the name of all Greek decedents regardless of their knowledge of the Parthenon.

²³⁶ King: 2006. pp.296

²³⁷ Barkan& Bush: 2002, pp.32

Chapter Seven: Fieldwork Results: Main Patterns Observed

Although there was much inconsistency amongst and between the different generations' attitude towards the case for the restitution of the Parthenon Marbles, there were some evident reoccurring behavioral patterns. Firstly, even though most of my collaborators were unaware of the case for the return of the Parthenon Marbles at the onset of our interviews, subsequent to being informed about the arguments for and against the return of the Parthenon Marbles these same collaborators initiated informal social mobilization amongst their friends and family. Moreover, while most of my collaborators had no initial knowledge of the Parthenon Marbles, they felt it important to refer me to their local cultural/social leaders in order to ensure that their culture be properly represented. Although the fact that the location of the Parthenon Marbles may not affect the lives of Montreal-Greeks, they are truly intent on ensuring that their culture remains visible and well represented within Montreal's multi-ethnic society.

Within the groups of initiated second and third generation Greek immigrants interviewed there was heterogeneity of opinion regarding the willingness to find mutual accommodation between the British and Greeks governments in regards to the location of the Parthenon Marbles. Most initiated second-generation Greek collaborators believed in immediate and unconditional restitution of the Marbles, whereas first generation cultural leaders who were well

informed prior to the interviews were more accommodating in regards to compromises.

7.1 Awareness

I set out to do my fieldwork with the optimistic intention to document whether or not, and in which way the case for the restitution of the Parthenon marbles affected the lives of Greek immigrants living in Montreal. Although I expected to find that some individuals would have relatively little awareness of the issue, I had nevertheless expected to find that this case had become so internationally popular that most Greek immigrants would have some knowledge of this debate. I was shocked to find that once I broke free of the cultural anthropology and sociology department of my University, very few people knew about the Parthenon Marbles.

When I attempted to discuss the case of the Parthenon Marbles with Greek individuals who knew nothing about it, they would insist on re-directing me away from themselves and towards their Hellenic cultural representative/ community leader/ friend who studied in politics, etc. It seems that although the majority of the Greek immigrants I interviewed outside of cultural organizations knew nothing of the Parthenon Marbles, they knew that my questions were important enough that they needed to find someone to represent the Greek culture who could answer them. Ironically, by leaving behind the cultural organizations and universities in order to find Greek individuals living outside Hellenic scholarly domains in order to document their attitudes towards the

Parthenon Marbles, I was being rerouted right back to the organisms I had just left by these same individuals! Here is an example of what I call rerouting:

“I don’t know... you should talk to [cultural representative], she’ll know about that. I’m really not sure... I’d rather you talked to her. I’ll call her for you if you want.”

It just so happened that I had interview the above-mentioned “cultural representative” earlier that summer.

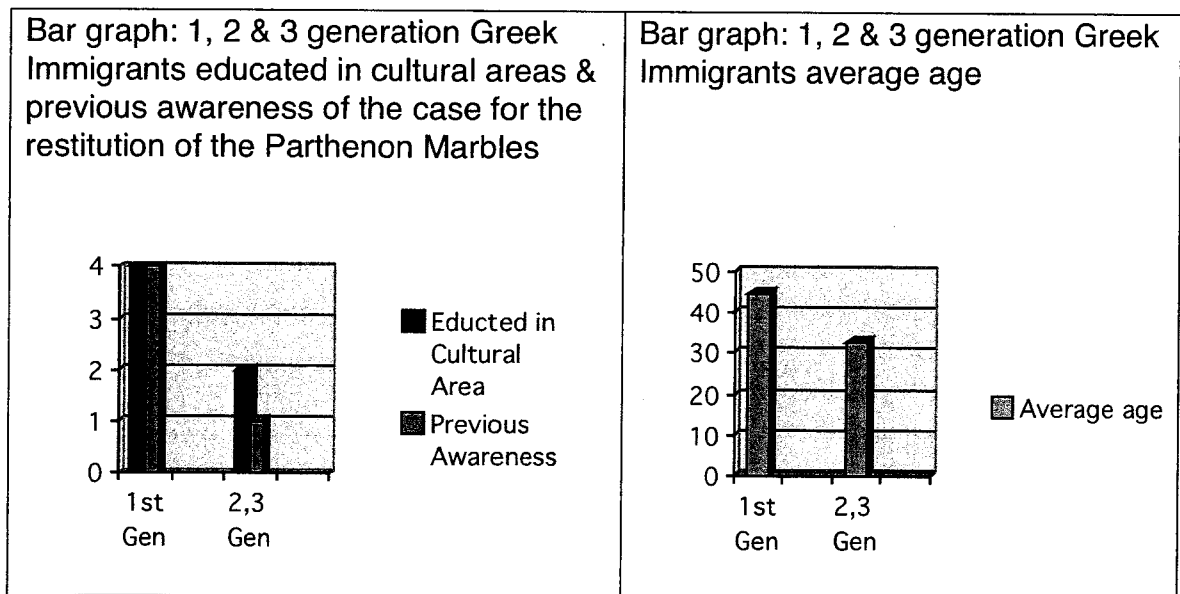
At this point, perhaps another anthropologist would have turned in the towel and decided that the case for the restitution of the Parthenon Marbles is simply unimportant to Greek immigrants who are not directly implicated within cultural, political or historical domains. However, as both my friends and certainly my husband would attest, I am a stubborn and persistent individual. Perhaps I should have wiped the slate clean and put to the side my carefully compiled literature review and move on to something of greater importance to the Montreal Hellenic community. Then again, this is not what I did; instead I decided to force the issue. I spent the beginning of every interview presenting an ‘objective’ list of the arguments for and against the restitution of the Parthenon Marbles, in so doing I have without a doubt influenced my collaborators. In a way, I feel validated in informing my collaborators of the Parthenon Marbles because, as Meskell explains, archeologists have had very little interaction with the public in the past²³⁸. It is this alienation, which has caused poor relations to develop between archeological researchers and local residents. She states that

²³⁸ Meskell: 2002

information gathered through archeology should be made available to the populace, especially those who are descendents of the culture from which the monument or artifact was erected²³⁹.

I realize that by informing my collaborators about the Parthenon Marbles, I did not discover my collaborators' usual opinions on this matter. Instead, I initiate interest, which was inexistent previously. Truthfully, the average Greek individual living in Montreal who collaborated with me on this project had no opinion on this cultural property case since it is of little importance to them. Instead of discovering unsolicited attitudes towards the cultural restitution case, I found that informal social mobilization is easily achieved by means of informing Greek individual living in Montreal on the case for the restitution of the Parthenon Marbles.

7.1.1 First, Second and Third Generation Greek Immigrants & Awareness



²³⁹ ibid

As these graphs indicate, on average, most first generation Greek immigrants who participated in this thesis were older than the second and third generation immigrant collaborators. Moreover, there are double the amount of first generation immigrant collaborators who are educated in cultural, sociological or classical domains than second and third generation immigrants. This may be due to the age discrepancy, which may have permitted the more senior individuals time to become informed about the Parthenon Marbles. This being said, it is rather understandable that on average, those individuals who were educated in these domains were knowledgeable in regards to the case for the restitution of the Parthenon Marbles. There were three first generation Hellenic cultural community leaders involved in this research whereas only one second generation political leader (who was unaware of the Parthenon Marbles) and one college graduate who majored in history. The results of this thesis suggest that first generation Greek immigrants are significantly better informed regarding the case for the restitution of the Parthenon Marbles than second and third generation immigrants. However, considering that four out of ten of the main first generation Greek immigrants interviewed for this thesis were educated in cultural, sociological or classical domains (whereas only one member of the second and third generation immigrants was educated in history) I would rather conclude that first generation Greek immigrants are more involved in heritage studies than second and third generation individuals. What is more, while keeping under consideration the limited number of collaborators of this thesis; the

case for the restitution of the Parthenon Marbles is known to Greek individuals educated in domains relative to heritage studies regardless of whether they are first, second or third generation immigrants.

7.2 Mobilization

Since most of my collaborators were unaware of the case for the restitution of the Parthenon Marbles, I took it upon myself to present them with the arguments of both the British and Greek governments and noted their reactions. Once my interview complete I would request to meet again with my collaborators (usually within two months) in order to evaluate whether their opinions had changed. Fifteen out of approximately twenty-one of my collaborators agreed to meet a second time. Prior to the second interview, several of my collaborators who self-categorized themselves as knowing little to nothing about the Parthenon Marbles took it upon themselves to research the situation and history of the Elgins on their own, mostly through the use of the Internet and newspapers. I then conducted follow-up interviews (semi-structured) with these individuals in order to note how their opinions have changed. I was totally unprepared for the level of personal interest my collaborators displayed for this research project. I can only describe this experience as fanning a Hellenic flame.

Jack A. Goldstone, American sociologist and political scientist, defines informal mass mobilization as occurring when individuals decide to come

together through loose social networks in order to protest events²⁴⁰. He explains that modern technology, such the Internet, is a popular modern means to stimulate informal mass mobilization²⁴¹. I would suggest that in an environment of multiculturalism where cultural identity and cultural representation is of major importance to immigrants, informal social mobilization is easily generated. Barkan & Bush explain that artworks often serve to consolidate identities especially when they are being contested, like for example, when they are surrounded by multiculturalism²⁴². Without much encouragement on my part, my interviewees would conduct research on the case of the “Elgins” and other cultural property rights debates (and sometimes on Anthropology itself) on their own time (usually over the internet) and report back to me with information and their changing opinions as well as the opinions of their family members and friends. Hitherto it had been my interviews, which sparked the flame of passion in my collaborators; they then subsequently initiated social mobilization amongst their friends and family members independently of my research. These individuals would subsequently contact me and propose meetings with groups of these initiated individuals. Here is a sample of the dozens of emails I received over the course of my fieldwork:

Hi Jenny,
It's [Pythonic], remember me? We met at Second Cup to talk about the Elgin marbles about a month ago? I was wondering how things were going... I have done some reading on the Elgins recently and I was wondering if your offer to meet again was still good? I'd like to bring a few

²⁴⁰ Goldstone: 2001, pp.139

²⁴¹ ibid

²⁴² Barkan& Bush: 2002, pp.16

of the [social networking site] friends along if that's okay. We've been talking and I think they would like to let you know what they think about the [British Museum]. Give me a call and we can meet at my place if that's okay...

Collaborators like Pythonic enjoyed learning about their culture and in turn aided in my research effort well beyond the traditional role of informants. Many of my collaborators became my partners and friends. Although they had no knowledge of the case for the restitution of the Parthenon Marbles when I first interviewed them, by providing them with information I gather in my literature review, I sparked their interest on a topic which places their cultural identity in the limelight and in so doing, creates a symbiotic bond between their need for cultural recognition and my need to gather opinions on the case for the restitution of the Parthenon Marbles.

7.3 Symbolism & Greek Communal Identity: In theory and in Practice

7.3.1 In Theory

An identity is questioned only when it is menaced, as when the mighty begin to fall, or when the wretched begin to rise, or when the stranger enters the gates, never, thereafter, to be a stranger.... Identity would seem to be the garment with which one covers the nakedness of the self... This trust in one's nakedness is all that gives one the power to change one's robes²⁴³.

Most scholars argue that the return of the Elgin Marbles is a very sentimental topic to the Greek people; the Parthenon Marbles are often depicted in anthropomorphic terms in an attempt to embody the feeling of unity, as Hamilakis explains: "the notion of fragments, the pain and mutilation, homeland and exile, reunification and repatriation, the recollection of fragments and the

²⁴³ Baldwin, James: 2008.

reconstitution of the whole”²⁴⁴. This reunification is often portrayed as a metaphor for nationalism. Hamilakis explains that the Greek government is promoting the concept that the Marbles have no owner per se and they only desire to return ‘to the place they were born’. In fact, the Greek government has abandoned the ‘ownership’ discourse and taken up a position in which the Marbles are considered living beings (ancestors in the flesh) that are in exile and imprisoned. This exile is, according to Hamilakis, related to the exile felt by five million Greeks living outside the nation, which have for the most part fled authoritarian regimes and civil war²⁴⁵. St. Clair also compares the Elgins to the Greeks who long to return home²⁴⁶. This metaphor is associated with the legend of Ulysses (hero overcoming great feats to return home) and the concept of ‘nostos’ (the desire to return home to ‘our country’)²⁴⁷. The desire for reunification of the Parthenon is therefore associated with the national body; the fragmentation represents the violence committed upon the nation and its monuments. The feeling of loss increases the nationalistic sentiment: “...if they were not so violently separated from their home, their place of birth, their relatives, they would not have aroused such passions, such feelings and emotions”²⁴⁸.

According to Merryman, the argument for nationalistic sentiment associated with artifacts can be deconstructed into five components: cultural memory, cultural survival, the sense of Pathos, cultural identity and the

²⁴⁴ Hamilakis: 2007, pp.277

²⁴⁵ Hamilakis: 2007, pp.280

²⁴⁶ St. Clair: 1998, pp.332-333

²⁴⁷ ibid

²⁴⁸ Hamilakis: 2007, pp.282

nourishment of the sense of community²⁴⁹. Whelan & Moore contend that landscapes and monuments permit communities to experience a sense of continuity with the past, and in order to maintain this sense of identity the maintenance of landscapes and monuments is essential²⁵⁰. Hamilakis states that following Greek independence in 1829, the material remains of the ancient Greek culture aided the community to construct a new concept of Greek identity and a continuance with the past²⁵¹. Once Greece won independence, monuments became associated with “The Golden Age of Greece”, they were veiled in a nationalist mythos and served as inspiration for a Grecian future as powerful and influential as the past²⁵². Robert Browning asserts that regardless of when the nationalistic symbolism of the marbles was formed (whether it be a contemporary reaction to colonialism or a continuance from ancient Greek pride), the Elgins are important emblems of Greek identity²⁵³.

7.3.2 In Practice

Even though these attitudes and sentiments were present in my interviews with individuals who were deeply involved within Hellenic Heritage and cultural academia, outside of the cultural/academic domains, virtually none of the Montreal-Greeks interviewed identified with the Parthenon Marbles. One of the heads of the Montreal Hellenic Society expressed his nationalistic sentiments about the Parthenon Marbles as follows: “...the biggest part is the inheritance... it

²⁴⁹ Merryman: 2000, pp.103-105

²⁵⁰ Whelan & Moore: 2006, pp.85

²⁵¹ Hamilakis: 2007, pp.79

²⁵² Hamilakis: 2007, pp.79-80

²⁵³ Merryman: 1987, pp.135

makes most of the Greeks find their own identity... they have an association not only with ancient Greece but also with the continuance of Greek history..."

However, other members of the Greek community who had originally echoed the previous comment eventually confessed (following a few interview sessions) that the physical location of the Parthenon Marbles was relatively unimportant to them as long as the Hellenic cultural origins of the marbles was affirmed by all visitors to the British Museum: "...As long as they don't claim them as their achievements, and they keep them safe and available to anyone who wants to see them... I don't personally care if they're in England or on the Acropolis".

When I asked this collaborator how his colleagues felt about his opinions regarding the Marbles' restitution case he stated that he would never publicly announce his feelings to members of his community because it would inevitably cause unnecessary disputes: "They're not going back so why start a fight over it now?"²⁵⁴ National artworks and visual representations of the homeland often serve to consolidate identities, especially when they are being contested, such as in the case of Greeks living in a multicultural environment²⁵⁵. These revelations of opinions were observed on one other occasion with an individual who initially told me what she thought I wanted to hear, or perhaps, what she thought she "should say" in order to promote a nationalistic outlook of herself: "A good Greek wants the Elgins to go back, even when I listen to the debates on Youtube I can't seem to really care... I guess I want them to go back because Greeks want them back,

²⁵⁵ Barkan & Bush: 2002, pp.16

but I'm not in Greece so... they can stay in England for all I really care". The images of the Parthenon Marbles hold conflicting notions to immigrants and second generation Greeks living in Montreal, although many scholars see the Elgins as metaphors for the Diaspora desire to return home, this seems not as solid a concept as previously established.

Unlike the Diaspora studied by historians such as Hamilakis Greek individuals living in Montreal who participated in this thesis are not political refugees, they are voluntary immigrants. Therefore, they do not relate with the concept of exile that has been associated to both Greek refugees and the Parthenon Marbles. Many Greek Immigrants and first generation Montreal-Greek individuals interviewed do not derive their identities solely from Hellenism; their identities are in fact established through a combination of locales, cultures and experiences²⁵⁶. Thus, my collaborators' identities are not deeply affected by the case for the return of the Parthenon Marbles. It is my opinion, having conducted this ethnography, that although it was obvious that many of these individuals had opinions which clashed with that of the Hellenic political proclamations, they were reticent to state their views openly for fear of isolating themselves from their Greek cultural community. This is best explained by one my Orcus in the following statement: "I have one foot in Greek culture and one in Canadian culture, if I lost my Greek heritage I would either have to learn to go through life hopping on one foot like a handicapped person or simply fall over..."

²⁵⁶ Anonymous, interview: May 23, 2008. Montreal.

Although the Parthenon Marbles may not affect the identities of the majority of the Greek-Montrealers interviewed during this thesis, the same cannot be said about Montreal-Greek cultural representatives. Half of the cultural representatives interviewed, on the other hand, felt as though they were obligated to represent their culture by professing the desire for the Marbles to return to Greece when truthfully, they had very little concern for the ultimate residence of these monumental Hellenic artifacts.

Chapter Eight: A Theoretical Endeavor: Object Diaspora

The Parthenon Marbles are, without a doubt, a concern to most scholars who are knowledgeable in Hellenic cultural heritage. Despite the fact that I have shown that most Montreal-Greeks who were involved in this thesis were initially relatively unaware of this cultural struggle, it is apparent that they knew to refer me to their cultural representatives, whom they trusted to be mindful of cultural events and whom they believed would accurately represent their culture. I have therefore opted to examine the discussions I have experienced with these cultural representatives and, with the aid of my in-depth literature, propose an alternative view of the Parthenon Marbles, not as property but as living heritage.

8.1 Marble Flesh: Preservation, Byronism & Sensorial Significances

As one of my elderly collaborators (Thalassa) told me one afternoon as she, her daughter (Nyx)²⁵⁷ and I sat on her balcony drinking tea and eating crackers: “Have you ever touched our sculptures Jenny?” “Well... no” I responded, “You aren’t allowed to touch the artifacts in most museums.” She shook her head and said “... anyone can tell that they are not just lumps of stone when you lay your hands on them <tears forming in her eyes>, they have skin, and veins... they breathe and sweat... they are spiritual... they are more than alive. How could anyone understand them? They are divine...?!”



²⁵⁷ Nyx served as a translator

As the interview progressed, I asked her daughter to ask her whether she was afraid that people would damage and wear down the sculptures by touching them, and if she would rather that the Greek government focus on preserving these items (like the British Museum does) rather than exposing them to the tactile senses of their people.

After what felt like an eternity of them discussing back and forth during which I truly thought they had forgotten about my presence, the daughter swiveled her chair around to face me. She explained that her mother does not consider the wearing down of the statues by the elements or by people touching them as deterioration rather she sees the weathering of the marbles as a form of natural aging. She compared her own aging to that of the Marbles by explaining that even though with age she might not be as “thin or young as she once was...” she still considers herself and her aged body “beautiful”. Her daughter explained to me she did not (or could not) speak of these sculptures as “things”. Therefore the question of weathering was associated to the natural progression of ageing by which the individuals (or sculptures in this case) changes over time in a natural way. Women get wrinkled, and statues get sleeker, regardless, they change with time to become something different, not necessarily something diminished. I myself take pride in all the various scars I have acquired in my lifetime; their lessons and stories will never be forgotten since they now become part of my being. Fiona Candlin, lecturer in Museum Studies and Assistant Dean in the School of Arts at Birkbeck University of London states in her article called

The Dubious Inheritance of Touch that museum curators should “be skeptical of claims that objects lose their aura once they’ve been touched. Sometimes the wear and damage leaves the power of an object unaffected or even adds to it”²⁵⁸.

Even though I now understood and could relate to her reasoning my collaborator’s daughter persisted using yet another metaphor: “Toys are not meant to be left in their packaging... can you imagine children being surrounded by toys but told that they can only look and not touch?” To which I responded: “I guess that means that they aren’t toys at all at that point... then they’re only pretty things and a source of...(the daughter completes my sentence) “longing. They become a source of resentment and detachment, not ambition and ... experience, the way they were meant to be by our ancestors”.

The need to touch and connect on a personal level with monuments is a theme, which recurred often in my meetings with interlocutors. I remember on one rather pleasant evening sharing a beer on a terrace with one of my now close friends (Pythoress) discussing the burning desire to pass the velvet rope in museums and feel the items on display. She made the following comment in a rather joking matter, which nevertheless struck a note of truth: “I was in Mexico once... I went to the Aztec pyramids, when I got there I saw a sign that said, “Please do not touch the ruins”... all I could think was what are they afraid? That we will ruin them?”

In the Western world, touch is considered a primal, ‘lesser’, and animalistic sense; in the realm of museum artifacts, it is moderated strictly and

²⁵⁸ Candlin: 2006, pp.151

reserved to owners and curators²⁵⁹. To touch someone or something that does not belong to us or is considered part of our close social circle is often associated with immaturity and impertinence. I would go as far as to state that our society is so visually oriented and tactilely inhibited that we have become voyeurs. Museums cater primarily to the visual senses, they minimize or obliterate the sense of touch in order to ostensibly preserve objects from wear, which would occur over time if guests were permitted to touch the pieces. This is not, in my opinion and the opinion of several of my collaborators an effective way to create a sense of intimacy between museums guests and the oeuvre d'art. Candlin argues that touch is equated within the museum with "...a lesser form of vision, as an easy, primary process that requires no particular skill or as something that inspires feeling but is unconnected to thought..."²⁶⁰. She goes on to explain how museums such as the British Museum do have handling tables where guests are encouraged to touch certain chosen items while volunteers regale them with information on the particular objects being manipulated²⁶¹. Candlin disapproves of this museum development by explaining that these tactile expositions are meant to abate criticism against the purely visually oriented British Museum²⁶². Moreover she explains how nothing is expected to be learnt through touch in these expositions, it is simply a way of creating "a more direct, personal and welcoming experience" when entering the museum in order to prepare the

²⁵⁹ Classen & Howes: 2005, pp.201 & 206

²⁶⁰ Candlin: 2006, pp. 149

²⁶¹ Candlin: 2006, pp. 148

²⁶² ibid

visitors to move onto fully visual expositions; touch is seen as a stepping stone towards vision”²⁶³. Likewise, Moore and Whelan explain how monuments as part of landscapes are deeply connected to both the “visual-factual” and the “sensual-emotional” as well as keys to reshaping or maintaining collective memories²⁶⁴.

To know something requires more than to simply observe it, as the anthropological methods of fieldwork have taught us; one must participate in the culture, experience it and connect with it on a personal and emotional level. This is true access, a deep understanding of someone, something, or a way of life. The same is true for archeological artifacts, to know them; they must be available to be experience by several senses including sight and touch. Many scholars profess that museums have a very important role in creating access to historical objects in order to inform the general population of the diversity and achievements of mankind. The concept of ‘publicness’ is defined by Ruth Gavinson as “being known, accessibility, ownership, control, accountability, effect and intimacy”, likewise Benn and Gauss state that access is: “ being known, physical accessibility and the degree of intimacy one may achieve with the object”²⁶⁵. Intimacy is a recurring requirement associated with openness to the public and accessibility, however this notion clashes with a rather strong western and European dogma of preservation and stewardship.

²⁶³ *ibid*

²⁶⁴ Whelan & Moore: 2006, pp.6

²⁶⁵ Gavison: 1983, pp. 48

Classen & Howes clarify that the sense of touch is “an important medium of intimacy between the visitor of the collection and the collection itself”²⁶⁶. They describe how prior to the nineteenth century museums were not focused on preservation and offered to their guests full tactile access of their artifacts. It was only in the latter part of the 1800s that the modern focus on visual learning and preservation took hold: “Touching the collection was not only deemed to be “uncivilized”... it was also considered to be unacceptably damaging”²⁶⁷. Carman, on the other hand contends that, “Choosing to exercise restraint on one’s own use of a resource does not serve to deny it completely: but it does create the conditions under which others may have access to it as well... when the value is a social value held by all...”²⁶⁸ One can only conclude that the need to preserve historical treasures for future generations to enjoy on a superficial level is more important to western museum trustees than it is to stimulate and create a forum of deep teaching and understanding amongst the present population through the manipulation of museum objects²⁶⁹.

8.2 Living Objects: From “Cultural Property Rights” to “Living Heritage Rights”

How does one know what is or is not living? All definitions of “life” have led to scientific and philosophical debates and overall inadequate outcomes. The truth is: life occurs whether humans beings can quantify and categorize it or not. As sentient beings, we are aware of our status of being “alive” however, other

²⁶⁶ Classen & Howes: 2005, pp.202

²⁶⁷ Classen & Howes: 2005, pp.208

²⁶⁸ Carman: 2005, pp.115-116

²⁶⁹ Classen & Howes: 2005, pp.202 & 216

living entities such as vegetation, organisms and animals that share certain of our organic compositions are also said to be alive. In an attempt to make sense of our surroundings, humans endeavor to bring order to chaos through taxonomy. This section will attempt to return some chaos to subjective human forms of classification. For decades the Greek government has been claiming that the Parthenon Marbles are not mere monuments but entities with 'life potential'²⁷⁰ whom they consider to be ancestors of the Hellenic people. Consider this: since it has been previously established that neither ultimate objective logical truth nor an indubitable definition of life exists, it will be taken at face value that the Parthenon Marbles are in fact, as the Greek government claims, alive.

The concept of living sculptural materials such as marble is not in any way a novel idea. Take for example the following passage from a sculptor's handbook: "The concept of 'living materials' acknowledges that every material has an active presence, a character, a capacity for change, that entitles it to be considered 'alive'..."²⁷¹ Moreover, living objects can be seen in First Nation cultures where spiritual understandings of locations, animals, people, and objects are often animated by divinity. An example of this is the Hodenosaunee First Nation ritualistic tribal mask feeding ceremonies conducted twice a year at the Canadian Museum of Civilization²⁷². Objects are often seen as representing a people, an era or a form of spiritual being(s) and in so doing, they themselves become living avatars of the focus of admiration and/or adoration.

²⁷⁰ Ouzman & Edwards: 2006, p.277

²⁷¹ Andrews: 1983, pp.1

²⁷² Classen & Howes: 2005, pp.215

Recently, during the opening speeches of the New Acropolis Museum the Cultural Minister of Greece declared that: "The museum is the ethical power that calls [the Parthenon Marbles] back so they can be reunited. The marbles here are calling the marbles in London"²⁷³. The notion of monument integrity is brought to a whole new level in this speech, henceforth associating the return of the Parthenon Marbles with the reunification not only of historical structures with their embedded decorative sculptures but of separated family members. The Greek government has skillfully publicized this anthropomorphization and humanization of the Marbles. In so doing, Greek authorities propose that the Parthenon Marbles are in exile or perhaps even political prisoners from a time of Turkish occupation. They were ripped from the arms of their family, placed in confined cages, transported away from their land and displayed in an alien environment for the amusement of their captors. Classen and Howes propose a grim picture of artifacts who were "conquered" and transported away from their native land and forced to assimilate into "a new social order and made to conform to a new set of values imposed by their governor-the collector or curator"²⁷⁴. They are in all accounts seen as slaves, bounty or even prisoners.

8.4 Object Diaspora & Cultural Compromises

The term Diaspora has been used by scholars such as Hamilakis and St. Clair as referring to the exile of Greeks from their homeland during times of political, social and economic instability. It is this version of the word 'Diaspora'

²⁷³ Reuters Video. June 21, 2009.

²⁷⁴ Classen & Howes: 2005, pp.209

which is often equated to the condition of the displacement of the Parthenon Marbles from their Hellenic place or origin to the British Museum. However, within social sciences, Diaspora is defined as the international movements and resettlement of cultural beings away from their homeland. As previously mentioned, the Montreal-Greeks who took part in this study were voluntary immigrants and therefore belong to this form of Diaspora. Once integrated into a new community, Greek immigrants are affected by and in turn affect the local culture. Generation after generation new identities are constructed which mesh and sometimes clash with homeland ideals and traditions. Therefore I would suggest that the Parthenon Marbles being displayed in the British Museum be considered part of object Diaspora as pertaining to an involuntary movement away from their homeland. This term is primarily being used as a response to the Greek government's position on the nature of the Elgin Marbles: They claim that these archeological wonders are not objects at all but in fact living ancestors of the ancient Hellenic people who have been exiles from their land.

Throughout my thesis I sought to determine whether or not individuals living in the Greek Diaspora of Montreal associated with the exile of the Parthenon Marbles. I questioned whether the return of the Marbles would be important to Greek immigrants in Montreal because they themselves desired to return home. As demonstrated in chapter seven, the answer is no: Greek immigrants in Montreal who are not schooled in classics, politics or cultural heritage do not associate with, nor know of, the case for the restitution of the

Parthenon Marbles. This is understandable considering that Greek immigrants in Montreal were not exiled from Greece like the Parthenon Marbles instead they chose to leave. In my opinion, there is little question that the Parthenon Marbles would have, given the option, desired to remain *in situ* on the Acropolis with their confrères rather than travel to England with Lord Elgin. Sadly, neither the marbles nor the Greek people were consulted prior to this epic decision. The Parthenon Marbles have resided in the British Museum since 1816, therefore, it is the opinion of some scholars that within these two hundred years the Marbles may have developed attachments to their imposed host land while still longing to return home to Greece. Barkan & Bush suggest that cultural property may not be completely inalienable; physical separation from an object, which was associated with a culture's identity, may lead to the extinction of its affinity or, create a new identity experienced by its new owners²⁷⁵.

Consequently, how does one determine the wants and desires of objects with "life potential" when they have established relationships with both their native land and their host country? First off, by re-classifying heritage pieces such as the Parthenon Marbles as objects with 'life potential' instead of cultural property, we must first and foremost consider their "object rights". As Ouzman and Edwards state "...humans and objects produce and project each other and should have contextually equivalent standing"²⁷⁶. These scholars also posit that objects should have the right to a home, not necessarily their "original home" but

²⁷⁵ Barkan & Bush: 2002, pp.32

²⁷⁶ Ouzman & Edwards: 2006, p.277

“the object’s right to integrate with or reject its current surroundings”²⁷⁷. They suggest that in cases items are claimed to be “inalienable” an objective third party should consider the contemporary and historical affiliations of both the present and historical owners²⁷⁸. Take for example the case of *Mullick vs Pradyumna Kumar Mullick*. This case was concerning a religious family idol, which was housed in an ancestral family house and cared for in shifts by family members. This debate focused on whether the idol itself was movable by its appointed family member caretaker as though it were any other form of property²⁷⁹. The family member who’s turn it was to care for the ancestral idol desired to remove it from its traditional location to instead be placed in his residence. When this case was brought to the courts, the Privy Council showed great impartiality when it declared that in accordance with Hindu religion, “the will of the idol as to its location must be respected...”.²⁸⁰ According to the Hindu religion, all beings and objects are “equally infused with this supreme form of being” and therefore have a will and must be considered “subjects” rather than “objects”²⁸¹. Therefore, simply because it was the family member’s turn to care for the idol did not mean that he had the right to disregard the idol’s will and move it from it’s ancestral home to his private residence.

I suggest that in this modern era of mobility, immigration, Diaspora, cultural exchanges and hybridization, anthropologists could serve as mediators in

²⁷⁷ Ouzman & Edwards: 2006, p.282

²⁷⁸ *ibid*

²⁷⁹ Howes: 2005, pp.13

²⁸⁰ *ibid*

²⁸¹ Howes: 2005, pp.14

cultural property restitution cases. Anthropologists are uniquely prepared to serve as a 'neutral' third party due to their training to detect and disclose their own personal prejudices while simultaneously documenting the contemporary opinions of the two cultures contending for artifacts by conducting long-term participant observation fieldwork. As Stephen Weil ²⁸² suggests, an international mechanism is needed in order to manage museum artifact ownership acquired from cultures with a diversity of "cosmology, customs and law" pertaining to "objects" with "wills" such as the 1970 UNESCO convention.²⁸³ Howes argues that although this may be efficient regarding "trans-cultural" debates, it is overly simplistic when dealing with "cross-cultural" misinterpretations²⁸⁴. This is where ethnographies provided by anthropologists to a committee of individuals with various professional and cultural backgrounds (perhaps UNESCO representatives) would help contextualize the case at hand. These ethnographies could aid in the determination of what concessions and compromises (if any) will be applied in a mutual and ethical manner in order to satisfy both cultures' access to the cultural property in contention.

²⁸² Stephen E. Weil was the scholar emeritus at the Smithsonian Institution's Center for Education and Museum Studies. He was also deputy director of the Hirshhorn Museum and Sculpture Garden.

²⁸³ Weil, Stephen, as cited in Howes: 2005, pp.15

²⁸⁴ Howes: 2005, pp.15

Conclusion

The Parthenon Marbles are symbols of an epic time in Hellenic history and a testimony to humankind's achievements. Many scholars have argued that these monuments have become associated with the exile felt by Greeks having left their homeland during social and political instabilities. This thesis has shown that Greek immigrants living in Montreal do not associate with these monuments in this way since they are voluntary immigrants and not refugees. Not only do Montreal-Greeks not associate with these marbles but also in most cases, they are not aware of their predicament. An interesting pattern observed during this research was the keenness of many collaborators, who were unaware of the case for the restitution of the Parthenon Marbles, to refer this researcher to their cultural or political representative. In retrospect, most of the Montreal-Greek collaborators involved in this thesis considered cultural representation imperative, regardless of their unawareness of the specificities of the Parthenon Marbles restitution case. At the outset, the answer to this thesis' primary research question of whether the case for the restitution of the Parthenon Marbles is important to Greek immigrants living in Montreal is no.

In order to delve deeper into the subject matter and to extrapolate from conclusions drawn by scholars presented in the literature review, this researcher used unorthodox interview techniques, which included educating collaborators about the case for the return of the Parthenon Marbles and contextualizing cultural property restitution cases by means of fieldtrips to museums followed by

focus groups discussions. Although it has been noted that these methods have without a doubt influenced this thesis' collaborators, in so doing this researcher has given back to her partners through transference of knowledge and they in turn have provided this thesis with a first hand perspective on informal social mobilization.

Once exposed to the case for the restitution of the Parthenon Marbles, first, second and third generation Greek immigrants collaborators frequently developed personal enthusiasm for the return of the marbles. As a result, this newfound passion eventually created informal social mobilization by seeping down through social and kinship networks and creating groups of impassioned individuals. On average, every one of my main collaborators provided this researcher with information on the attitudes of at least three of their peers. Interviews were conducted with main collaborators as well as (in most cases) certain of their kin and peers who on average were proponent for the restitution of the Parthenon Marbles. However, even within the groups of zealous Greek immigrants there were mixed opinions regarding the need to find mutual accommodation between the British and Greek governments. Most initiated second-generation Greek collaborators believed in immediate and unrestricted restitution of the Marbles, whereas first generation cultural leaders who were well informed prior to the interviews were more accepting of cultural compromises. The single history educated second-generation Greek collaborator who had previous knowledge of this cultural property case believed in mutual

accommodation as the best answer to this political dilemma. Therefore, although this thesis' conclusion does indicate that the case for the restitution of the Parthenon Marbles is relatively unimportant to Greek individuals living in Montreal who are not well versed in Hellenic cultural, political or historical areas, it has been shown that once informed about this case, mobilization is established which engenders opinions within these same individuals.

As a final point, this thesis proposes that cultural objects such as the Parthenon Marbles should not be considered as cultural property, instead they should be valued as embodying a 'living essence' and therefore considered as living being with 'object rights'. Moreover, if the Marbles are to be considered living objects, it must be acknowledged that they have been carefully cared for by the British for over two hundred years; during this time they most likely have developed attachments to their host land. Notwithstanding the circumstances by which these monuments were removed and exported to England by Sir Thomas Bruce, they have by now developed a double identity, one that it predominantly Greek but also to a degree British.

Therefore, it is the opinion of this scholar that living objects, such as the Parthenon Marbles, should be represented by a committee of individuals of various backgrounds and cultures who could utilize anthropological and sociological reports and ethnographies to help ascertain the wills and desires of the objects in question. The ultimate results, in the case for the restitution of the Parthenon Marbles, should in this scholars' humble opinion be based on cultural

compromises and accommodations by means of alternating hosting between the British Museum and the New Acropolis Museum. This way, the vacant places reserved for the Parthenon Marbles in the New Acropolis Museum would no longer be a source of sadness and resentment, but a symbol of human compassion, cooperation and understanding.



New Acropolis Museum Caryatids

***The empty space emphasizes the absent Caryatid
being displayed in the British Museum***

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